# HELLENISTIC ART

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This paper was read in a slightly shorter version at the symposium on "The Hellenistic Origins of Byzantine Civilization" held at Dumbarton Oaks in May 1962. The purpose of the symposium was exploratory; the purpose of this paper was to provide a sketch of the Hellenistic background for Professor Ernst Kitzinger's discussion of Hellenistic elements in Byzantine art. Professor Kitzinger and I had agreed on certain themes, which in turn have determined the character of my presentation. Given the tentative nature of this essay, I have not tried, in preparing it for publication,[1] to conceal the fact that this was a symposium paper designed for oral delivery. It seems hardly necessary to add that "Remarks on Some Aspects of Hellenistic Art" would describe more adequately what I have attempted than the sweeping title of "Hellenistic Art" under which the paper appeared on the symposium program.

[1] I have profited from discussions with Professor E. Kitzinger and from papers presented by members of my seminar on Hellenistic Art in the spring of 1962. For help in securing photographs I am indebted to Giacomo Caputo, Jean Charbonneaux, Pierre Devambez, Hans Möbius, and Richard Stillwell. Philippa D. (Mrs. Judson T.) Shaplin aided me in preparing the manuscript.

The footnotes are designed only to provide references to easily accessible illustrations. In principle, I have cited M. Bieber for sculpture and L. Curtius for Pompeian paintings. Many of the paintings will also be found in E. Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung der Griechen* (1923); A. Rumpf, *Malerei und Zeichnung* (*Handbuch der Archäologie*, 6) (1953); M. Borda, *La pittura romana* (1958).

# INTRODUCTION

THERE is much we do not know about Hellenistic art. Pergamon is the only major artistic center of which we have some coherent evidence. Few great original works of sculpture have survived, and the loss of Hellenistic painting is apparently well-nigh irreparable. Furthermore, the leading achievements of Hellenistic art were concentrated in a few areas and were accomplished by a limited number of individuals. There is a striking discrepancy between the mediocrity of local material found in excavations of Hellenistic sites and the art of high caliber which determined the course of artistic development. New discoveries have been made, but have not radically changed the situation. Thus, the mosaics of Pella, which may be expected to represent the highest artistic level in this medium (fig. 6), teach us that the transition from decorative concept of the mosaic, prevalent in the Classical Age, to imitation of monumental painting was beginning around 300 B.C.[2]; but they cannot be taken as evidence for the major accomplishments of the leading painters of that era. The Hellenistic paintings of Kazanlik (fig. 2) reveal a surprisingly bold exploration of perspective illusion in the chariots dashing around a dome, and prove that such motifs of the Fourth Pompeian style (fig. 1) had Hellenistic forerunners.[3] They confirm that majestically enthroned figures placed in a diagonal position to the foreground, such as are later featured in the paintings of Boscoreale,[4] are indeed Hellenistic. In draftsmanship, use of color, and use of light, however, these paintings of Kazanlik are obviously the work of provincial craftsmen on the same simplifying level as the painted stelae of Pagasai or Alexandria.[5] It remains true that we do not know a single first-rate Hellenistic painting which can be dated earlier than the first century B.C.

[2] Ph. Petsas, *Archaeology*, 2:4 (1958), p. 251 ff., with photographs. E. Vanderpool, *Amer. Jour. of Arch.*, 62 (1958), p. 324f., pls. 84–86, and 66 (1962), p. 390, pl. 109f. S. Hood, *Archaeol. Reports, Jour. of Hellenic Studies* (suppl. 1961), p. 15f., fig. 18f. M. Robertson, *Greek Painting* (1959), pp. 166, 169f. (color). That these mosaics form technically, compositionally, and stylistically a transition from the purely decorative mode of the Classical mosaics of Olynthos to the Hellenistic tesselated mosaics imitating monumental painting has been shown by W. C. Kohler in his seminar paper. The imitation of wall painting is clearest in the new stag hunt mosaic signed by Gnosis, *AJA*, 66 (1962), pl. 109. Fig. 6 is after a color postcard, *Ekdosis Minoa*. For other Hellenistic mosaics, cf. K. M. Phillips, *Art Bull.*, 42 (1960), p. 243 ff.

[3] Kazanlik: C. Verdiani, *AJA*, 49 (1945), pp. 402–415, figs 1–7, 9–13. V. Micoff, *Le tombeau antique près de Kazanlak* (1954), p. 13, pls. 23f., 27f., 34f. (color), and A. Vasiliev, *Kazanlishkata Grobniza* (1958), date the tomb to the late fourth or early third century B.C. Fig. 2 is after Micoff, pl. 23: 2. The chariot in fig. 1 is after the wall painting in the Macellum, Pompeii, L. Curtius, *Die Wandmalerei Pompejis* (1929, reprinted 1960), fig. 107 (hereafter abbreviated "Curtius"), German Archaeological Institute 53.619.

[4] Verdiani, *loc. cit.*, figs. 7, 9f., especially the female figure; for Boscoreale, cf. Ph. W. Lehmann, *Roman Wall Paintings from Boscoreale in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (1953), p. 30ff., pls. 1–5, also fig. 29. E. Simon, *Die Fürstenbilder von Boscoreale; Deutsche Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft*, 7 (1958), survey of proposed identifications.

[5] Pagasai: A. S. Arvanitopoulos, *Graptai stelai Demetriados Pagason* (1928). Alexandria (and other Hellenistic material): B. Brown, *Ptolemaic Paintings and Mosaics and the Alexandrian Style* (1957), and the reviews by O. Brendel, *AJA*, 65 (1961), pp. 211 ff., and Ch. Picard, *Revue arch.*, 1961: 1, p. 241 ff.

## CHRONOLOGY AND PERIODIZATION

Although *Hellenistes* was a term known to antiquity, "Hellenistic period" is a modern term.[6] In history, as in art history, it is often understood to encompass the time between the death of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.) and the Battle of Actium (31 B.C.). Ancient art critics of the first century B.C. and first century A.D. held a somewhat different view. They followed a Classicistic theory in which the sculptor Lysippos, the painter Apelles, *and* their students were still accounted exemplary and (in our sense) "Classic." Pliny's famous statement, *inde cessavit ars,* implies that the era between 296–293 and 156–153 B.C., the very period which modern art critics regard as the height of Hellenistic art, was a deplorable lapse.[7] In this particular passage (*Natural History,* XXXIV: 52), Pliny discusses sculpture, but other statements by Cicero, Quintilian, and Pliny himself indicate that similar views prevailed with regard to painting.[8] In an interesting seminar paper, John Kroll has pointed out that among the paintings mentioned by Classical authors, Classical pictures heavily outnumber Hellenistic works; the majority of those mentioned are of the Late Classic period and of the time of Alexander the Great. Indeed, the number of certifiably Hellenistic paintings of the third and second century B.C. cited by ancient authors is surprisingly small.[9] This lack of evidence makes a rather emphatic contrast to the glowing recreations of the Alexandrian, Antiochene, and Asiatic schools of Hellenistic art conjured by some modern scholars. On the other hand, ancient opinions indirectly su stantiate my view that Hellenistic painting, though rich in quality, may have been limited in quantity; and the dominance of a Classicistic theory in late Republican and Early Imperial writers and art critics makes it probable that the majority of monumental paintings imitated in Pompeii and Herculaneum were selected from the creations of the time considered by these ancient critics the Golden Age of painting—namely the fourth and the early third century B.C.[10]

Modern periodization of Hellenistic art based on stylistic analysis of major works of sculpture presents a more persuasive conceptual scheme and, with the possible exception of the latest phase, does better justice to the artistic phenomena. In this modern view, the time of Alexander the Great and the first half of the third century B.C. constitute a phase of transition in which are found, side by side, artists whose work emphasized continuity with the

[6] *Hellenistes,* Acts 14: 1, cf. M. Bieber, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age,* revised ed. (1961), p. 3 ff.

[7] A. W. Lawrence, "Cessavit ars," *Mélanges Ch. Picard,* vol. 2, *RA,* Ser. VI, 31–32 (1949), pp. 581–585, suggests Pasiteles as the author. Brunn's argument that Pliny's source was Xenokrates, who stopped at this point, is irrelevant; other sources were available.

[8] Quintilian, *Inst. Or.,* XII: 10, 2–6. Cicero, *Brutus,* 18: 70. The Elder Pliny's book on painting (XXXV) leaves the same impression.

[9] Ruling out the controversial Timomachos of Byzantium, there are left Antiphilos, who was perhaps still considered Classic, Epigonos, Artemon, the notorious Demetrios *ho Topographos,* and a few anecdotal references datable to that period.

[10] J. Kroll had the ingenious idea of compiling a "Popularity Index" based on frequency of references in ancient authors. All but two or three of the first twenty are either fifth century or fourth (reaching into the beginning of the third). Nealkes of Sikyon is the only clearly Hellenistic painter and he figures in nineteenth place. Timomachos is in eighth place; if he was a contemporary of Caesar, he would be considered acceptable by Classicists.

Late Classic style, as in the followers of Praxiteles, and pioneering revolutionaries who broke sharply with the ideals of the Classic, as for instance Polyeuktes in his statue of Demosthenes, dated 280–279 B.C.[11] There follows the "High Hellenistic" phase of that superb, monumental, and dynamic style which, for us at least, is best reflected in the sculptured works of the Pergamene and Rhodian schools (fig. 5, Victory of Samothrace).[12] This phase appears to have lasted from *ca.* 250–150 B.C. The term "Hellenistic Baroque" suggests something of its character, just as the term "Hellenistic Rococo" evokes associations which are at least partly relevant to a movement that, although beginning perhaps as early as the late third century B.C., reached its height in the second half of the second century.[13] Thereafter the artistic situation became more complicated. The "Baroque" current, equivalent in art of the "Asianic" manner in oratory and literature, continued, but it experienced increasing competition from the rising Classicism. Sulla (138–78 B.C.), the first Roman patron of art on an imperial scale, seems to have favored Hellenistic regal Asianism—it was from the temple built by a Hellenistic King Antiochus IV (175–163 B.C.) that Sulla carried off columns for his reconstruction of the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol; the image for Sulla's temple was made by his "court sculptor" Apollonios, son of Nestor, who, on the evidence of his surviving work (torso Belvedere, seated boxer), followed the "Baroque" manner, albeit in a lamer, disintegrating mode. Thus again, the famous mosaic given by Sulla to the temple of Fortuna Primigenia in Praeneste was, according to Gullini's recent researches, a Late Hellenistic work.[14]

Caesar and then, more consciously and programmatically, Augustus favored Classicism, but Pliny the Elder's (A.D. 24–79) extravagant admiration for the Laocoon, "the work to be preferred to all that sculpture and painting have produced" (*N.H.*, XXXVI: 37), and the extraordinary assemblage of "Baroque" Rhodian sculpture in the Flavian decoration of the cave at Sperlonga[15] prove that under Nero and the Flavians the Asianic current of Hellenistic art came into its own again.

There are many excellent reasons to place the end of the Hellenistic age and Hellenistic art around 30 B.C. or, more generally, at the beginning of the reign of Augustus. Yet this does not do justice to the complexity of the artistic situation, especially in the long view which is concerned with survival and

[11] The decisive clarification of major stylistic phenomena was largely the work of G. Krahmer, whose articles are cited by M. Bieber, p. 203, especially "Stilphasen," *Röm. Mitteilungen*, 38–39 (1923–24), p. 138ff., overelaborated by V. Müller, "Chronology of Greek Sculpture," *AB*, 20 (1938), p. 359ff. My own views on the development to *ca.* 40 B.C. are presented in *JHS*, 65 (1947), p. 45ff. For Demosthenes, cf. Bieber, p. 66f., figs. 214–229. The original of the Medea painting was the work of a kindred spirit, cf. Curtius, p. 306f., fig. 174f., pl. 7f.

[12] Bieber, chaps, 8 and 9. For Nike also R. Lullies-M. Hirmer, *Greek Sculpture* (1957), p. 77, fig. 548.

[13] The term was popularized by W. Klein, *Vom antiken Rokoko* (1921). Cf. also E. Buschor, *Das Hellenistische Bildnis* (1947), p. 33ff., and Bieber, chap. 10, who judiciously speaks of "Rococo trends" rather than a Rococo phase.

[14] Pliny, XXXVI: 5. Apollonios: Bieber, p. 180, figs. 764–769. Lullies-Hirmer, p. 80f., figs. 259–261. G. Gullini, *I mosaici di Palestrina* (1956).

[15] F. Magi, *Il Ripristino del Laocoonte* (*Atti Pontif. Accad. Romana di Archeologia*, Ser. III, *Memorie* 9 [1960]). G. Jacopi, *Ritrovamenti dell'antro cosidetto del Tiberio a Sperlonga* (1958). P. McKendrick, *The Mute Stones Speak* (1960), p. 172ff.

effects of the Classic, the Hellenistic, and the Roman achievements. I propose to treat the first century B.C. *and* the first century A.D as the third and final phase of Hellenistic art—which was at the same time the first phase of Imperial Roman art. For "two souls dwell in the breast" of the art of the Early Empire (L. Curtius). The truly Roman creative achievements stem from the demands of the Roman state, of the Roman Empire, and from special institutions of the Roman society. Such are the demands for an architecture commensurate with the authority of the Roman state, for reliefs advertising the Roman mission in history, and for portraits which maintain the uniqueness of the individual. On the other hand, particularly in the private sphere, Hellenization of the entire cultural mode and tenor in a highly diversified process of imitation, adaptation, and synthesis was carried on by artists who were representatives of living Hellenistic traditions.[16] Some of the striking creative accomplishments of the age were logical consequences of developments initiated by earlier periods of Hellenistic art; this is true of the exploration of optic devices in architectural painting of the second and the fourth Pompeian "styles," of the spatial enlargement of panoramic landscapes peopled by small figures, and of the brilliant development of coloristic illusionism.

## THE ROLE OF HELLENISTIC ELEMENTS IN LATER ROMAN ART

In the three centuries between A.D. 100 and 400 the Roman Empire produced a phenomenal quantity of largely unified "Imperial Roman" art. But the direction of the development is reversed from the Hellenistic exploration and observation of man and nature toward an increasingly abstract bias. At first imitation of earlier arts is to the fore. The second century A.D. has left to us the largest number of copies of Greek statues, and the imitative character of sarcophagi reliefs is well known.[16a] Then the huge naturalistic vocabulary of the Greek tradition is reduced and operated on an abstract basis,[17] in compositions based on abstract themes (figs. 3, 4). Finally, the vocabulary itself is simplified and made abstract.

In the West, this development is dramatized and accentuated in the crisis of the third century A.D.; in the East, especially in Asia Minor and Syria, as is

[16] On the general problem, cf. K. Schefold, "Pompejis Tuffzeit als Zeuge für Begründung römischer Kunst," *Festschrift B. Schweitzer* (1954), e.g. p. 310. It has often been stated that the names of Roman artists are usually Greek; what has not been emphasized is that in the process of acculturation, in Rome as in the United States, there was a fundamental difference between the "first generation" who came from active Hellenistic art centers, and the second, third, etc, generations of artists who had grown up with or under the Romans; a Greek name means very much less in the second century than in the first. For the material cf. G. M. A. Richter, *Proceed. Amer. Philos. Soc.* 95:2 (1951), p. 184ff. J. M. C. Toynbee, *Some Notes on Artists in the Roman World*, Coll. *Latomus*, 6 (1951).

[16a] An interesting attempt to show the abstract approach to subject matter (allegories of virtues and the like) conditioned the formulaic use of Greek figurative motifs on Roman sarcophagi is made by K. Schefold, "La forme créatrice du symbolisme funéraire des Romains," *RA* (1961): 2, p. 178ff.

[17] The juxtaposition of the Pompeian copy of a painting of *ca.* 300 B.C., fig. 3, showing Achilles surrendering Briseis and the rearrangement and reduction of the same original in the third century A.D. mosaic from Antioch, fig. 4, illustrates one phase of the process. Cf. Curtius, 317f., fig. 23. M. M. Gabriel, *Masters of Campanian Painting* (1952), p. 35ff., pl. 21. K. Weitzmann, *Antioch*, 3 (1941), pl. 50, fig. 110. The same process in two Dionysos-Herakles mosaics, C. R. Morey, *Early Christian Art* (1942), fig. 22f.

shown by finds in Ephesus, Sardis, and Antioch, the displacement is more gradual. The end does not come until after the reign of Heraklios (A.D. 610–641). As the stylistic foundations of art were changing from the natural and organic to the symbolic and abstract, the traditional Hellenistic types and themes were driven into the ever narrowing area of secular or "educational" (as in illustrations of authors) art.[18] The truly creative energy of the age was channeled into the service of visualizing the Christian universe and symbolizing the Christian faith.

## FACTORS LIMITING A COMPARISON OF HELLENISTIC AND BYZANTINE ART. ESSENTIAL TRAITS OF HELLENISTIC ART

In an attempt to make the vast subject manageable, Professor Kitzinger and I have agreed to limit our discussion to certain major themes. I shall try to combine this attempt to seek out what was and what was not of interest to Byzantine artists with some intimation of what I conceive to be some of the essential traits of Hellenistic art. Thus we may hope to avoid an undue displacement of emphasis. Nevertheless, some of the major limitations of this procedure must be indicated. To make any useful comparisons with Byzantine art, we must emphasize pictorial media; yet the basic intuition of Hellenistic art was still plastic, and the plastic, three-dimensional human figure held the center of the stage. Then again, the focal themes of Byzantine art are the Sacred Image and the Sacred Cycles of the Old and New Testament. Neither the cult image nor the mythological, biographical cycle are the most expressive vehicles of Hellenistic creativity. Its full grandeur and splendor revealed itself in divinely hallowed, sacral but not sacred, atmosphere of heroic myth, and, on a more comprehensive scale, in complexes in which nature, architecture, sculpture, and probably painting were united for the sake of the total effect in a new sense of an immediate (as against the Classic distanced) nature-given reality. The Victory of Samothrace (fig. 5) sweeping down from a mountain to alight on a "real" ship over the real water of a fountain pool, the Gauls of the great Attalid dedication fighting their defiant battle against the backdrop of the grand vistas of the eagle eyrie of Pergamon, and the Eros, asleep on his "real" rock (fig. 7), these seem to me to represent the essence of Hellenistic achievement.[19] If we look for their common denominator, it is vitality, *vis vitalis*, heroic or idyllic, manifesting itself within the framework of the vast diversity of nature, which is the true hero of Hellenistic art.

[18] I have remarked on the progress toward abstraction in the art of the Roman Empire in *The Season Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks* (1951), pp. 137f., 142f., 210ff., where I have also noted the parallelism with formalization of literature and education. For the secular and educational aspects of Roman art, the mosaics and the manuscripts provide the best examples. Cf. in general K. Weitzmann, *Ancient Book Illumination* (1959), and for "educational-cultural" survival of mythology, my remarks in *Speculum*, 21 (1946), p. 255ff.

[19] Victory: cf. note 12, *supra*. Gauls: as proposed by A. Schober, *RM*, 51 (1936), p. 104ff., and *Die Kunst von Pergamon* (1951), pp. 46, 54, pls. 20f., 80. Bieber, p. 108ff., figs. 281–283, 424–427. Sleeping Eros: Bieber, p. 145, figs. 616–618. G. M. A. Richter, *AJA*, 47 (1943), p. 365ff., fig. 1ff. R. Martin rightly notes that the "monumental urbanism" of Pergamon, which is of one piece with the Pergamene style in sculpture, works toward the heightening of nature rather than against nature, *L'urbanisme dans la Grèce antique* (1956), chap. 3.

## EROTICISM

Eroticism pervades Hellenistic art. If any divine powers other than Tyche enjoyed universal and popular interest, it was Eros, Aphrodite, and Dionysos. Hellenistic poetry played countless variations on the theme of the mischievous god of love, sometimes baby, sometimes a small boy, who hits indiscriminately with his arrows, burns lovers with his torch (fig. 10), and is in turn punished (fig. 16), his bow broken, his wings clipped.[20]

A world of infantile fantasies transforms myth and daily life, as when erotes play at adult work.[21] Starting from the theme *omnia vincit Amor*, the erotic invasion of myth brings before us erotes who take away the armor of the god of war and the club of the strongest of mortals, Herakles.[22] In myth after myth, heroic couples are turned into sentimental lovers.[23] Almost every story is seized upon as an occasion for revelation of seductive feminine charms. Thus Dirce's white beauty rather than her tortured plight strikes the eye in the cruel story of the revenge which Amphion and Zethos took on their stepmother.[24]

There is frank and joyous love-play, especially among satyrs and meanads, now interpreted as nature's children (fig. 9);[25] but in much of Hellenistic art we sense an overtone of sophisticated perversion. It is the only art which has openly glorified the hermaphrodite (fig. 8).[26] At the other end of the spectrum, the Classic theme of tragic love is heightened in pathos, and the portrayal of inner struggle is shown in greater detail—as in the silver mirror often considered a representation of Phaidra or Dido (fig. 13).[27] The prominent Hellenistic contribution, however, is the sensuous intoxication with the delicate arts of love.[28]

[20] Fig. 10 after G. Lippold, *Gemmen und Kameen*, n.d., pl. 30:9–10. On poetry, F. Lasserre, *La figure d'Eros dans la poésie grecque* (1946), p. 150ff. A. Furtwängler, in Roscher, *Myth. Lex.* (1884), vol. 1:1, p. 1365ff., and *Antike Gemmen* (1900), III, pp. 167f., 280f.

[21] Best known from the amorini paintings of the Casa dei Vettii, Herrmann-Bruckmann, *Denkmäler der Malerei*, pls. 22ff., 35. Their Hellenistic character is discussed in detail by F. Matz, *Ein römisches Meisterwerk* (1958), p. 169ff., pl. 36. Cf. those shown in Delos, Curtius, p. 78, fig. 45.

[22] Although the purpose is different, much material has been collected by F. Matz, *op. cit.*, p. 62ff., which also includes amorini with thunderbolt of Zeus, trident of Poseidon, and quiver of Apollo. Amorini and Ares, Curtius, pl. 1., Matz, pl. 7b.

[23] As in groups of Ares and Aphrodite, Perseus and Andromeda, Dionysos and Ariadne, Curtius, figs. 149f., pl. 1. E. Simon, *Jahrbuch d. k. d. arch. Inst.*, 76 (1961), p. 130f., fig. 15. L. Richardson, *Mem. of the Amer. Acad. in Rome*, 23 (1955), pl. 20.

[24] Richardson, p. 156, pl. 55 ("Perseus Painter"). For the relation to sculptures of the same subject, cf. *JHS*, 65 (1947), p. 51, no. 45. A similarly obtrusive display occurs in the Iphigeneia picture, Richardson, pl. 47 ("Iphigeneia Painter"). Curtius, pl. 5, here fig. 37.

[25] Alinari 28 080. Museo Comunale, Antiquarium. Bieber, p. 147, fig. 627.

[26] Sleeping hermaphrodite, Louvre. Cf. Vigneau, *TEL: Encyclopédie photographique*, III, p. 231 B and C. J. Charbonneaux, *La sculpture du Louvre*, (1936), pl. 45f. Bieber, p. 146f., figs. 623, 625ff., and p. 124, fig. 492.

[27] After B. Maiuri, *Museo Nazionale di Napoli* (1957), pl. 151, Dido. Phaidra: P. Friedlaender, *Spätantiker Gemäldezyklus in Gaza* (1949), p. 52, pl. 4. M. Della Corte thought of Cleopatra. For the influence of Greek tragedy and its Hellenistic transformations, cf. M. Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture* (1959), chap. 11.

[28] Cf. M. Hadas' remark: "In respect to sexual emotion Meleager (of Gadara, 140–70 B.C.) marks the principal turning point in the history of poetry from Homer to modern times.", and his discussion of "Love, Triangular and Pure," *Hellenistic Culture*, pp. 112, 147ff.

## HUMOR AND LAUGHTER

From archaic times on, the burlesque, the fantastic exaggeration, the parody was the great vehicle of Greek humor. It is the essence of the gusty, lusty, riproaring laughter of the Old Comedy. In the Late Classical age, this tradition lived on in the Phlyax.[29] Hellenistic humor is first and foremost an extension of this theatrical humor into the reality of daily life. In an amazing outburst of caricature, Hellenistic artists portrayed slaves, dwarfs, misshapen people (fig. 12), and barbarians as real-life cousins of the fantastically ugly and ridiculous people of theatrical comedy. These grotesques combine the traditional satyric approach of the comedy with keen observation, replace the stylized exaggeration of the masks with nature's quirks, and bring the new naturalistic and scientific approach to bear upon the traditional types and situations.[30] This humor is not always good-natured. The Hellenistic world thought funny what we may consider cruel and brutal. In his fascinating study *KTO KHRO*, R. Zahn recalls that cripples and an eighty-year-old naked hag danced indecent dances for the amusement of the wedding party of a Macedonian nobleman.[31]

Laughter and smile, on the other hand, were glorified as expressions of an uninhibited, desirable natural state best embodied in Dionysiac beings and children (figs. 9, 11, 12). Laughter as an expression of ebullient vitality achieved a positive value which was not, however, permitted to invade the traditional solemnity of heroic myth—except in little byplays involving satyrs or erotes.[32] Even though this Hellenistic exploration of emotional optimism was limited and tentative, it pioneered a new approach to emotional experience—not until Rubens and Frans Hals do we again find laughter used as a joyful expression of exuberant natural life.[33]

## GENRE

With the grotesques, we have already touched upon one kind of Hellenistic genre. Let us consider briefly some examples of other types. Despite their

[29] Ample illustrations in M. Bieber, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater*, 2nd ed. (1961), chaps. 3, 7, 8, 10.

[30] Fig. 12 is after V. H. Poulsen, *Cat. des terres cuites grecques et romaines*, Glyptotek Ny-Carlsberg, no. 55, pl. 36f. For the material, cf. Bieber, 96f. For the general attitude, the writings of the physiognomici deserve to be explored. Cf. G. Krien, "Der Ausdruck der antiken Theatermasken im Polluxkatalog und der pseudoaristotelischen 'Physiognomik,'" *Jahreshefte des oesterreich. arch. Inst.*, 42 (1955), p. 84ff. Krien's discussion is limited to the bearing of Pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomica*, a Hellenistic treatise, upon the Hellenistic types of theatrical masks. D. G. Mitten is preparing a study on grotesque and caricature in ancient art.

[31] Athenaeus, IV: 130 c. R. Zahn, "ΚΤΩ ΧΡΩ", *81. Winckelmannsprogramm Berlin* (1923), p. 9ff.

[32] Cf. H. Kenner, *Weinen und Lachen in der griechischen Kunst* (Oesterreich. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, *Sitzungsberichte* 234: 2 [1960]), p. 89, fig. 21. Kenner, p. 93f., emphasizes the rarity of laughing figures and concludes that only satyrs, centaurs, comedy masks, and children—non-human, or not-yet-human beings—were permitted to display laughing faces because an ideal of emotional restraint dominated Greek art. This does not quite do justice to the situation in the Hellenistic age.

[33] As, for instance, the young Pan in the Telephos picture, Curtius, p. 230ff., fig. 3. M. M. Gabriel, *Masters of Campanian Painting* (1952), pl. 2.

intensive observation of "low life" the "Street Musicians" by Dioskurides of Samos (fig. 14) are conceived in the spirit of the satyric grotesque.[34] The brilliantly painted "Woman and Shepherd" (fig. 15), on the other hand, have been conjectured to represent a mythological scene from the Wanderings of Demeter.[35] Daily life or humanized myth?—that this question can arise is characteristic of the Hellenistic age. Certainly humanization of myth was progressing in the arts. This desire to make the divine tangible, detailed, and concrete need not lead to lack of belief. Thus it has been said of Dionysos that while the divine child becomes ever more sacred, its representations become ever more human.[36]

The theme of mother and child, on which Professor Kitzinger will touch in his paper, discloses something of the Hellenistic approach to humanization of myth and, at the same time, reveals some interesting traits of the attitude of the artists toward the theme of motherhood. There is genuine human appeal in such pictures as that of Danae nursing little Perseus[37] after she and her baby have been rescued from their floating box by the two fishermen, who look on with astonishment and sympathy; but the picture is not primarily a symbol of tender relation between Mother and Child. Rather it is a humanized visualization of a certain incident important for the mythological story. That nursing mothers are often figures of the Dionysiac thiasos, that tender scenes of women fondling babies show not mothers but benevolent nymphs, that Eros and Aphrodite are the son and mother most frequently shown (fig. 16), that scenes of tenderness sometimes turn out to be erotic—as in the baby cupid sitting in Psyche's lap (fig. 10, right)[38]—all of this suggests that motherhood as such was not being glorified. Indeed, in a recent study on Birth and Childhood of Divine Children[39] J. Laager has concluded that in the Olympian mythology the mother-child relationship tends to fade into the background in favor of a male protector of the child—a Hermes (fig. 17),[40] a Silenus (fig. 18).[41] Hellenistic art impartially humanizes and sentimentalizes both—the mother as well as the male protector.

[34] Curtius, p. 337ff., pl. 9, considers it a theatrical scene. Fig, 14 is after E. Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung der Griechen*, 3, fig. 684.

[35] Fig. 15 after Richardson, *MAAR*, 23 (1955), p. 126, pl. 23:2, "Io Painter." Cf. Curtius, p. 316, fig. 181.

[36] By M. Seiger in her report on Birth and Childhood of a God in Hellenistic Art.

[37] Richardson, pl. 49:1, "Iphigeneia Painter."

[38] A. S. Arvanitopoulos, *Athenische Mitteilungen*, 37 (1912), p. 76ff., pls. 2–3. H. Fuhrmann, *JdI*, 65–66 (1951), p. 103ff. L. Leschi, *MonPiot*, 35 (1936), p. 139ff. A. Maiuri, *La Casa del Menandro* (1932), p. 335ff. Morgoulieff, *Monuments antiques representant les scènes d'accouchement* (1893), and the literature quoted by J. Laager, cf. note 39. For the bathing scene, much discussed since the discovery of the Baalbek mosaic, there are not only Hellenistic but even archaic forerunners. Cf. M. Lawrence, *De Artibus Opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky* (1961), I, pp. 323–334, II, fig. 13. K. Weitzmann, *Ancient Book Illumination* (1959), p. 55ff., fig. 62ff., Achilles. E. Simon, *JdI*, 76 (1961), p. 160f., figs. 32, 34f. For a typical Dionysiac "mother" who is actually a nymph, cf. the Farnesina painting, Curtius, fig. 64f.

[39] J. Laager, *Geburt und Kindheit des Gottes in der griechischen Mythologie* (1957).

[40] Crater by Salpion, after Alinari 34 214. Bieber, p. 182, fig. 789f. Cf. W. Fuchs, *Die Vorbilder der neuattischen Reliefs* (1959), pp. 140, 166, pl. 27 a, who argues for a prototype of *ca.* 320 B.C., G. M. A. Hanfmann, *AJA*, 43 (1939), p. 229ff., for Hellenistic origin.

[41] Childhood of Bacchus, Naples, Alinari 34 126. G. E. Rizzo, *La pittura ellenistico-romana* (1929), pl. 107.

## ENLARGEMENT OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD: LANDSCAPES AND ARCHITECTURAL SETTINGS

One of the most striking creations of Hellenistic art are the so-called "sacral-idyllic landscapes" which lie in a border land between genre and myth. Here the mythical and sacral overtones are an integral part of the vision of an idyllic land of shepherds and wanderers, not the real shepherds and wanderers but the shepherds of the Theocritean idylls. Sometimes this idyllic land is shown for its own sake (fig. 19).[42] Sometimes it forms the setting for a mythological narration such as Odysseus' wanderings through the countryside, the portrayal of which became fashionable in Late Hellenistic Rome.[43] The very sketchiness of the pictorial technique enhances the dreamlike quality which is still ideal in a thoroughly Greek—but not in a Classical—way. What is missing here from the point of view of genre is not naturalistic observation but the direct, factual statement such as we encounter in untutored Roman folk art and in the Vienna Genesis (fig. 20), where camels behave like real camels, sturdy and mean,[44] in contrast to the evanescent vision of a camel as seen in the Yellow Frieze of the House of Livia (fig. 19).

The "sacral-idyllic" landscapes bring us to the problem of Hellenistic landscape in general. No subject is more controversial. This discussion must center on the famous Odyssey landscapes, certainly the most highly developed renderings of landscape which have come down to us from antiquity (fig. 21). P. H. von Blanckenhagen has argued that these pictures are derived from an earlier frieze-like Hellenistic painting which was not interrupted by columns or pilasters; the Yellow Frieze in the House of Livia and some other "sacral-idyllic" landscapes have been cited in support of this view.[45]

These putative Early Hellenistic landscapes remain phantoms. We must, I believe, accept this astonishing performance for what it is—a monument of the Hellenistic landscape painting in its latest, Roman phase. The most significant aspect of the Odyssey pictures is the sense of pantheistic vastness of nature, a nature which achieves importance equal, if not superior to the myth. This nature still receives its final animation from men; but the heroic mood is now nature's, not man's. The perennial life of the universe will go on, even when the Odyssey has ended.

In their comprehensive scope and sweep, the Odyssey landscapes are unique; but something of the same marriage of myth and nature in a poetic mode

[42] Yellow frieze, House of Livia, after P. Marconi, *La pittura dei Romani* (1929), fig. 78. Cf. *Monumenti della pittura antica scoperti in Italia*, Sez. III: III, pl. 7 (color plate). The most recent, sensitive appreciation of "idyllic" landscapes is at hand in P. H. von Blanckenhagen and Chr. Alexander's *The Paintings from Boscotrecase*, *RM*, Suppl. 6 (1962). Von Blanckenhagen's evaluation, p. 60f., agrees so closely with mine that it is perhaps relevant to observe that neither of us had an opportunity to consult the work of the other.

[43] Vitruvius VII, 5, *Ulixis errationes per topia*, which are, however, mentioned under *megalographiae*.

[44] P. Buberl, *Die byzantinischen Handschriften, Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der illuminierten Handschriften in Oesterreich*, N. F. 4: 1, National. Bibliothek. Wien, 1 (1937), p. 45ff., pl. 27: 13–14.

[45] Fig. 21 after Rizzo, *Le pittura ellenistico-romana* (1929), pl. 163. P. H. von Blanckenhagen, *AJA*, 61 (1957), p. 79f. K. Schefold, *AM*, 71 (1956), p. 211ff.

occurs in the various "sacral-idyllic" or "idyllic-mythological" paintings. In literature a similar chord, struck first in the descriptions of the Isles of the Blest, echoes in the "Blessed Landscapes" of Hellenistic romances.[46] In the celebrated picture of Paris on Mount Ida (fig. 22), the theme is "an ideal shepherd in hallowed solitude of the mountains," not the hero or the villain of the tragedy of Troy. It is this overtone of ideality of a dream-land as remote as Paradise which seems to have inspired Byzantine artists in Ravenna to adopt such a "Landscape with Shepherd" for the portrayal of the Good Shepherd;[47] but as may be readily seen by the Roman rendering of the subject in Hadrian's Villa, the Christian mosaicists drew their inspiration not from the pantheistic interpretations of Hellenism, with their small figures and large, panoramic landscape, but from the simplified "middle-scale" interpretations of the Roman period (fig. 23).[48]

In other Late Hellenistic representations, the ideality of the framework is less obvious and the specific character of the setting is elaborated, with some borrowings from the cartographic tradition. Civilized urban life is made part of this picture of the *oikoumene* when the so-called "city formula"[49] is added to panoramic vistas of sea and rock. Here again, in varying degree, the setting is more prominent than the action. The fall of Icarus is only an incident in the continuous life cycle of man and nature (fig. 24).[50]

Potentially, this kind of animated landscape was adaptable to historic narration. In the Jonah scene of the Paris Psalter (fig. 25), the artist seems to have been strongly impressed by the vision of an ancient "city by the sea" (fig. 24). Indeed, the miraculous delivery from the belly of the whale becomes almost incidental. There are other striking resemblances; the little boat with the spectators here turned into boatmen who throw a sacklike Jonah overboard, the upward thrusts of gesturing hands transformed from astonished comment into pious urgency of prayer, the lofty place of the luminous divinity in the upper regions of the picture—in one Helios, in the other the hand of God in sunlike orb. Here, for once, one feels that a Hellenistic model may have been the immediate source.[51]

We can recall here only briefly the great variety of other Hellenistic experiments in suggesting spatial, physical setting. What we know of Greek geometry and optics confirms the ancient tradition that architectural drawing applied to theater backgrounds was the primary vehicle for the only consistent optic constructions which ancient painting had achieved. We are fortunate in having in a Tarentine vase of the Late Classical period a reflection of an early

[46] M. Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture* (1959), chap. 16, "Blessed Landscapes and Havens," p. 212ff.

[47] Fig. 22 after Curtius, fig. 208. Ravenna: C. R. Morey, *Early Christian Art* (1942), p. 158f., fig. 168 (Galla Placidia).

[48] Fig. 23 after E. Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung*, 3, fig. 695. Color plate in S. Aurigemma, *Villa Adriana* (1961), p. 169, pl. 18.

[49] F. M. Biebel, *Gerasa* (ed. by C. H. Kraeling) (1938), pp. 341–351, pls. 67b, c; 68 a, b; 75a, 86ff.

[50] Fig. 24 after Alinari 39 387. P. H. von Blanckenhagen, *AJA*, 61 (1957), p. 82, pl. 32, fig. 11.

[51] Fig. 25 after H. Omont, *Fac-similés des miniatures et des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (1902), p. 9, pl. 12, MS graec. 139, fol. 431. For the motif of figures emerging from the door, cf. Curtius, p. 250, fig. 145. and K. Weitzmann, *Ancient Book Illumination* (1959), p. 61, pl. 31, fig. 69.

stage in this process (fig. 26).[52] Its final phase is seen in such pictures as that of Iphigeneia on Tauris set against a magnificently Baroque stage background in the house of Pinarius Cerialis.[53] Other solutions show cities climbing up mountains,[54] and bird's-eye views of cities (fig. 27),[55] intimate close-ups of civilized nature in Roman villas,[56] and rising rocks peopled with heroic, monumental figures as in the Orpheus painting from Pompeii—which is rather strikingly related in its composition to the rendering of Moses on Sinai in the Paris and Vatican Psalters.[57] This experimentation also comprises architectural backgrounds for narrative friezes such as are shown in scenes from the Iliad on the jug from Bernay and in the stucco frieze from Casa del Criptoportico in Pompeii (fig. 28).[58]

Enlargement of the physical world was thus, in the main, a Hellenistic achievement.[59] It remains to point out its obvious limitations. Despite their knowledge of axial perspective, Hellenistic painters never managed to detach this geometric construction from the representations of architecture and to apply it consistently to nature-made elements of landscape. The relation of landscape and figures remains in a kind of labile flux which enhances the sense of unreality. It is the unity of coloristic treatment, the dynamic play of highlights, and the sustained harmony of moods that holds this world together.

### ILLUSIONISM

"Illusionism" is a term often used to describe the great advance made by the Hellenistic painters in conveying the impression of a world rich with color, spread out in space, and enlivened with light and shade. The term is not unambiguous—ever since Plato antiquity had felt that there is involved in pictorial representation on a two-dimensional surface an element of illusion in the sense of delusion and deceit, of showing what is not. On the whole, Hellenistic art took a positive attitude toward this deceit. To ancient critics, the pictorial achievements of what we would term Late Classical and Early Hellenistic painting were nothing short of miraculous. To understand their enthusiasm, we must not forget that these were discoveries made for the first time in the history of mankind. A Late Hellenistic theorist, whose views

[52] Fig. 26, photograph Martin von Wagner Museum, Würzburg. H. Bulle, "Eine Skenographie" *94. Winckelmannsprogramm Berlin* (1934), pl. 2. M. Bieber, *History of the Greek and Roman Theater*, 2nd. ed. (1961), p. 68, fig. 266.

[53] Pinarius Cerialis: Bieber, *op. cit.*, p. 231, fig. 774.

[54] Boscoreale: Ph. W. Lehmann, *Roman Wall Paintings from Boscoreale* (1953), p. 90ff., fig. 51, pls. 11f., 14f., 17.

[55] Casa della Piccola Fontana, Pompeii. Fig. 27, after *RM*, 26 (1911), pl. 9.

[56] Boscoreale: Lehmann, *op. cit.*, pl. 20f.

[57] K. Schefold, *Theoria, Festschrift W. H. Schuchhardt*, 1960 (*Deutsche Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft*, 12–13), p. 209ff. Vatican Psalter graecus 381: Collezione Paleografica Vaticana I., *Miniature della Bibbia Cod. Vat. Reg. gr. 1 e del Salterio Cod. Vat. Pal. gr.*, 381 (1905), p. 17, pl. 21 and its model in the Paris Psalter, H. Buchthal, *The Miniatures of the Paris Psalter* (1938), p. 33ff., fig. 10.

[58] Bernay: K. Lehmann, *AJA*, 42 (1938), p. 87ff., fig. 4. Fig. 28 after F. Aurigemma in V. Spinazzola, *Pompeii alla luce degli scavi nuovi*, 2, (1953), p. 867ff., fig. 871. The scene shows Moira leading Hector out of Troy. Cf. K. Weitzmann, *Ancient Book Illumination* (1959), p. 37ff.

[59] For the situation in Classical Greek art, cf. G. M. A. Hanfmann, *AJA*, 61 (1957), p. 75ff.

are preserved by Pliny (XXXV: 29), states that painting at long last differentiated itself from other arts, discovered light and shade, explored hue, value, and gradations as well as contrasts of colors, and then added something described as *splendor* and specifically said to be different from light (*splendor, alius hic quam lumen*). This is usually translated as "glow"; what it appears to mean is the general heightening of optical effect attained by the use of high lights as well as by coloristic devices.

From our vantage point of post-impressionism and highly developed color photography, the achievements of Hellenistic painters seem curiously incomplete. Yet, even in the provincial reflection by Pompeian wall painters, such is the somnambulistic certainty in the evocative handling of the brush that a critic of the rank of a J. Burckhardt felt himself "seduced into impieties toward the Renaissance"[60] by the brilliance and brio of the ancient Campanians. In their best work, the new pictorial means are utilized to endow the human body, by color and high light, with a pulsating life and a juicy opulence which sculpture cannot attain.

"If there are any first-rate paintings in Pompeii, they are these," says a sensitive critic of this famous picture of Herakles and Omphale (fig. 30),[61] part of a triptych or trilogy celebrating the power of Dionysos. The picture is quite certainly by one of the best Pompeian painters of the Fourth Style. It is equally certainly a close rendering of a Hellenistic composition of the third century B.C. At the very least it is a testimonial for the ability of painters in the Late Hellenistic-Early Roman phase of illusionism to create an effect of rich coloristic contrasts modelled in broad strokes and enhanced by generalized light.

How these devices were utilized to heighten the expressiveness of a face is seen in the head of Theseus (fig. 29) from a good Pompeian rendering of a famous Late Classical original.[62] Breathing life, flashing glance, such and similar terms come to mind when we view this magnificent interpretation of a hero after battle.

Ancient painters never accomplished what Correggio and Rembrandt were to achieve—the visualization of vaporous atmosphere and the completely unified rendering of chiaroscuro. That they attempted night scenes at all was a revolutionary venture. What they did manage to convey with their strange and inconsistent flashing white lights is the drama of the night. The picture of the Trojan horse[63] with its ghostly little silhouettes and vague masses of people is perhaps the most far-reaching attempt of antiquity to dissolve its usually plastic figures; and in the moving rendering of Priam guarding the body of Hector (fig. 31), the dark quiet of the night is used to enhance the mood of the sad vigil.[64]

[60] Cited by Curtius, p. 22.

[61] L. Richardson, *MAAR*, 23 (1955), p. 139, pl. 36, "Achilles Painter." Fig. 30 is after Herrmann-Bruckmann, pl. 60.

[62] Fig. 29 is after Curtius, fig. 7. M. M. Gabriel, *Masters of Campanian Painting*, (1952), p. 30f., pls. 6–8, on whose attribution to the Herculaneum Master, cf. Richardson, *MAAR*, 23 (1955), p. 115. M. Robertson, *Greek Painting* (1959), p. 178f. (color).

[63] Made famous as an example of illusionism by F. Wickhoff, *Roman Art* (1900), p. 149f., pl. 12.

[64] House of C. Decimus Octavius Quartio. After Spinazzola, *Pompeii*, 2 (1953), fig. 1049.

That landscape and still life emerge as independent if subsidiary themes is characteristic of the interpenetration of the scientific interest in nature and the vitalistic attitude of Hellenistic painters. The sunlit solitude of heroic mountains was perhaps never more charmingly evoked than in the picture of the shepherd and ram (fig. 32); the very sketchiness of the landscape, the insubstantiality of the figures in the background emphasize its poetic irreality.[65]

To find that close-up segments of nature were considered subjects valid in their own right is even more remarkable in an art which was still anthropomorphic in essence. Hellenistic painting interprets still life not as *nature-morte* but as nature alive with a pantheistic life of which the carriers are light and color. Thus in a typical Pompeian "still life"[65a] the glass, with its miraculous property of responding to light, is even more alive than the animate bird. This truly is "glow and shimmer."

Such Hellenistic splendor, however, is always a heightening of the natural, not a quest for the radiance of the supernatural. Hellenistic monarchs were noted for luxury and the kings of Pergamon had a monopoly on gold-woven textiles, *Attalicae vestes*. Gold was used to depict gold objects and to increase effects of ornamental details; but to my knowledge neither gold nor silver was ever used to produce the effect of unearthly light, not even in representations of the halo which in Pompeian paintings was already used as a symbol of divine effulgence.[66]

## EMOTION

The Classical art of Greece had inaugurated a new approach to the portrayal of emotion which was made possible by the discovery of organic art and the resultant ability to establish a convincing relation between the soul and the body. Following up this breakthrough in many directions, Hellenistic artists enormously enlarged the scope and diversity of emotional situations which art might portray. Their precise observation of physical appearances and their careful studies of the relation between somatic and psychological factors enabled them to diversify the portrayal of emotions to an extent which, at first glance, appears infinite. Relaxed sleep (fig. 7) and blazing breathlessness (fig. 33) are as much within the power of Hellenistic artists as are the skilfully graduated responses in the crowd of spectators commenting on the expiring Minotaur (fig. 35).[67] Nevertheless, within and underneath this seemingly

[65] Fig. 32, Alinari 39 135. Curtius, fig. 213. Color: B. Maiuri, *Museo Nazionale di Napoli* (1957), p. 108.

[65a] From Herculaneum. B. Maiuri, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

[66] On the use of gold, cf. E. Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung*, 2 (1923), pp. 582, 586, 591, 710, 712. For early empire, cf. A. Boëthius, *The Golden House of Nero* (1960), pp. 102f., 112. Halo: cf. G. M. A. Hanfmann, *AJA*, 43 (1939), p. 234f.

[67] Fig. 33, jockey from the sea near Cape Artemision, after E. Buschor, *Vom Sinn der griechischen Standbilder* (1942), pl. 25. Cf. Bieber, p. 151, fig. 645; sleeping Eros, fig. 7, Metropolitan Museum, New York, neg. 131094, cf. Bieber, p. 145, figs. 616–618. Fig. 35 after B. Maiuri, *Museo Nazionale di Napoli* (1957), pl. 95, cf. L. Richardson, *MAAR*, 23 (1955), p. 121, pl. 21f., "Dioscuri Painter." Curtius, p. 213f., fig. 126, thought, probably rightly, that the spectator group goes back to a Late Hellenistic version derived from the same Late Classical original as the superior painting from the Basilica of Herculaneum of which a detail is shown in fig. 29; Curtius, fig. 7f.

realistic precision, there is always present a typical element, a belief that the general transcends the specific. Apart from the province of the grotesque, Hellenism continues to uphold the Classical belief in the beauty of man—only the human body is now fleshly and sensuously rather than neutrally and ideally beautiful. The heroic gesture still dominates, even when the emotional situation calls for brutality, suffering, and anguish (figs. 36, Laocoon; 37, Sacrifice of Iphigeneia),[68] subjects the ancient critics would describe as scenes of pathos, *pathe, animi perturbationes*.[69]

For Byzantine art, the treatment of the scenes of death, grief, and lament is of particular significance; and for this reason, it may be relevant to end this discussion with some Hellenistic interpretations of the same theme. Following the precedent set by Classical art, the great majority of sepulchral monuments was concerned not with scenes of grief and lament but with perpetuation of the memory of life.[70] The exception—and this is of interest for Byzantine art—are memorials of women who died in childbirth, as did Hediste, commemorated on the Hellenistic stele from Pagasai (fig. 38).[71] It is not impossible that such funerary scenes influenced the portrayals of death and burial in mythological illustrations; in an Ilias cycle, the corpse of Patroklos swathed in a shroud seems to echo the prostrate forms of dying women—and to anticipate curiously scenes of both death and nativity in Early Christian art.[72] From literary sources we learn that the pathetic contrast of an infant and a dead or dying mother was emphatically presented in famous Hellenistic paintings and sculptures.[73] This, however, is only an extension of that theatrical spirit of pathetic tragedy which Hellenism introduced into such legends as the myth of Pyramus and Thisbe.[74] In general, the heroic and mythical sphere interprets death in the spirit of life defiantly ebbing away (fig. 39) or as transition to eternal sleep.[75] This grandiose, pathetic tradition is in

[68] Fig. 36, Laocoon in new reconstruction after F. Magi, *Il ripristino del Laocoonte*, Pontif. Accademia Romana di Archeologia, *Memorie*, 9 (1960), pl. 41. Fig. 37, Sacrifice of Iphigeneia, photo, Boecker. Curtius, p. 290ff., pl. 5. Richardson, *MAAR*, 23 (1955), p. 148, pl. 47:1, "Iphigeneia Painter." The "beautiful" concept may have been modified to some extent by psychological associations of the kind indicated by references to color of skin and hair as reflections of character in Pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomica* and Pollux's catalogue of masks.

[69] Cf. Pliny, XXXV:98. It is generally conceded that the Pompeian picture of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, no. 68, cannot be a direct copy of Timanthes' Iphigeneia, although the motif of the father whose head is veiled may derive from it. This motif has been already discussed by ancient critics and those of the eighteenth century (Lessing, Fuseli) in the context of the question whether the highest degree of anguish can be expressed in art; cf. the passages cited by Jex-Blake and Sellers, *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art* (1896), p. 116, on Pliny, XXXV:73.

[70] For the Classical tradition, cf. K. Friis Johansen, *The Attic Grave-Reliefs of the Classical Period* (1951).

[71] Hediste: Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung* (1923), pp. 902f., 907, fig. 748.

[72] The corpse of Patroclus: House of C. Decimus Octavius Quartio, Spinazzola, *Pompeii*, 2, figs. 1030, 1032f. Cf. K. Weitzmann, *The Fresco Cycle of S. Maria di Castelseprio* (1951), pls. 5, 27, Nativity; pls. 3, 29, Joseph's dream; P. Buberl, *Illuminierte Handschriften in Wien* (1937) (note 44 *supra*), pl. 34:27, death of Isaac; pl. 44:48, death of Jacob.

[73] Aristeides of Thebes, painter, Pliny, XXXV: 98, "a mother lying wounded to death in the sack of a city; she appears conscious that her babe is creeping towards her breast." The picture was taken by Alexander the Great to Pella. Epigonos, Pergamene sculptor, Pliny, XXXIV:88, "infant piteously caressing its dead mother."

[74] G. E. Rizzo, *La pittura ellenistico-romana* (1929), pl. 134.

[75] Fig. 39, head of giant from copies of "Small Attalid Dedications," German Archaeological Institute, Rome, 36. 1150. Bieber, fig. 434f. Sleep—Bieber, figs. 425, 432.

Roman art transformed into scenes made urgent and drastic to the point of grief-torn ugliness (fig. 40); and it is from this less formalized, "drastic" tradition that some of the Early Christian artists may have drawn their inspiration.[76]

One type of mythological situation, however, did evoke a more "internalized," subdued, and moving interpretation. On an Etruscan urn from Volterra (fig. 41),[77]there is preserved the reflection of a great Hellenistic composition showing the dead and broken but still beautiful Patroklos being lifted from the chariot. Compassion and pity speak eloquently in the group of Patroklos and the two warriors who gently lower the body of the fallen hero. A comparison with Byzantine representations of the Descent from the Cross, as for instance with the fresco of Nerezi,[78] underlines both the common denominator in the motif and the difference in the treatment—the quietly beautiful, subued, in a sense objective, approach in the Hellenistic work, which excludes the spectator from immediate participation, and the poignantly expressive but also symbolically demonstrative power of the Byzantine masterpiece.

## EPILOGUE

In these perfunctory remarks I have sought to indicate something of the range of Hellenistic art which made it such a treasure house for the Romans and the Byzantines. Elaborating and enlarging the anthropomorphic art created by the artists of Classical Greece, Hellenistic art extended the potential of the Classical tradition by searching observation of the variety and diversity of human types and experience. Going beyond the Classic, Hellenistic artists discovered for the ancient world the largeness of nature and the possibility of envisaging a universe in which humanity is but a small part of a larger order. To this expanded kosmos, Hellenism added the new dimensions of textured local color, of light and shade, of splendor designed to heighten the feeling of life. Hellenistic art is a world of realistic unrealities—its major concerns are the defiant heroism of mythical and semi-mythical supermen, the sensuous and sentimental delights of love, the dream of a children's world where children play with gods and heroes; of grotesques uglier but also more exuberant than life; and—perhaps most comprehensively—the image of a sacral-idyllic world of pantheistic landscapes peopled with simple folk, whose worship of their rustic gods is uncorrupted by philosophic doubt, and whose peaceful, natural existence knows neither ambition nor strife. Religion in

[76] Meleager sarcophagus Louvre-Borghese, fig. 40, photo, M. Chuzeville. Cf. A. Paoletti, *Materiali archeologici nelle chiese dell' Umbria, Sarcofago con il mito di Meleagro* (1961), p. 44ff., where other examples of drastic, "ugly" scenes of grief on Meleager sarcophagi are reproduced. I owe the reference to C. C. Vermeule. On the increase of drastic, desperate grief in rendering of mourners in Roman art, cf. H. Kenner, *Weinen und Lachen* (1960), p. 57f. For Early Christian art, cf. Vienna Genesis, Buberl, *Illuminierte Handschriften*...(Wien, 1937), pl. 33:26, death of Deborah.

[77] Fig. 41, photograph, Soprintendenza Antichità, Firenze, no. 5463. Cf. D. Levi, *Rivista del R. Istituto di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte*, 4 (1932–3), p. 7ff., pl. 2b.

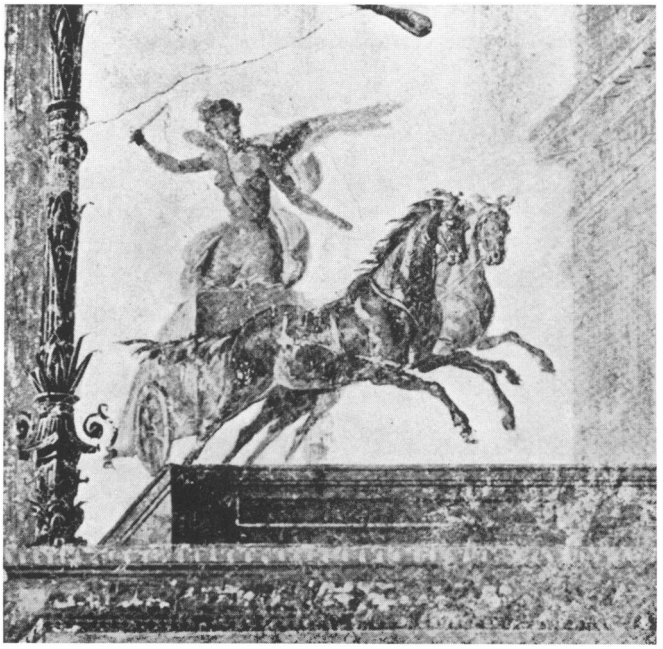
[78] P. Muratoff, *La peinture Byzantine* (1928), pl. 153. UNESCO, *Yugoslavia: Mediaeval Frescoes* (1955), pl. 9.

Hellenistic art is diffused and dispersed through all phases of existence, its myth is an afterglow which, like poetry, serves to elevate man's view of his past and his present. With all this yearning for the Golden Age of innocence and for escape to bucolic nature, the general tenor of Hellenistic art is life-affirming; even death is sleep, not decay. The hedonistic view of *KTO KHRO* parades its skeletons to encourage the spectator to live (fig. 34), not to die.[79] In contrast to Byzantine art, Hellenistic art is entirely and enthusiastically of this world, *huius mundi*, with all the good and evil this might imply for devout Christians.

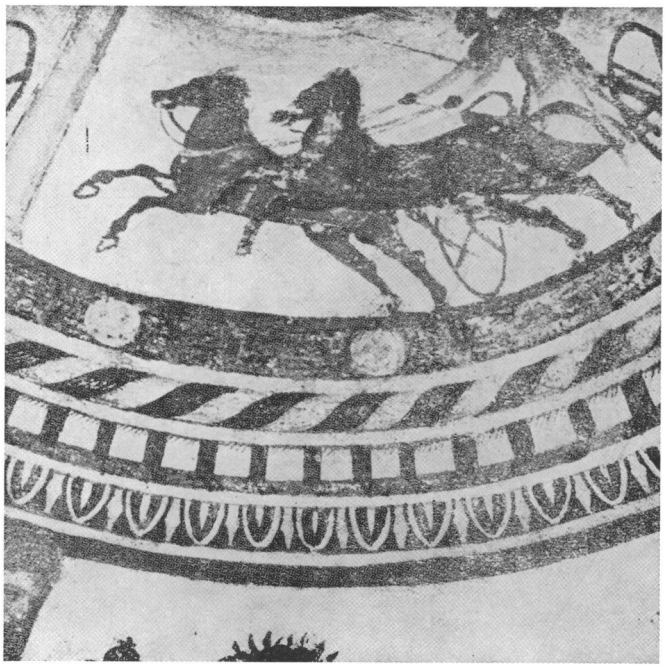
This Hellenistic art, authentically Greek in essence,[80] was doomed even without the Roman conquest—artistically, by the limits set to any naturalistic cycle; psychologically, by the lack of any powerful religious impetus; biologically, by its enormous geographical expansion from India to Spain, with the resultant thinning out of its carriers and the increasing erosive impact of the native attitudes and traditions. Its Roman heirs understood much of it, but not that *élan vital* which was the unifying idea of Hellenistic creativity. In the three centuries when the Roman Empire prospered (A.D. 100–400) and held sway over men's thoughts, the entire vision of life and the world changed from the heroic superman to the *civis Romanus*; and he in turn was transformed into a citizen of the City of God, as the *interpretatio Romana* of Hellenistic heritage was succeeded by *interpretatio Christiana*. Yet Hellenistic art "dying died not." To assess the share of Hellenistic elements in the mediaeval image of the Classical world and to trace the persistence of Hellenistic art as a latent force which, especially in the Eastern part of the former Roman Empire, could stimulate creative revivals, is a task which presents fascinating challenges to students of Byzantine art and culture.

[79] K. Schefold, *Die Bildnisse der antiken Dichter, Redner, und Denker*, (1943), pp. 166f., 216 (goblets from Boscoreale) with references. Fig. 34, photo, M. Chuzeville. This side shows Zenon (left) pointing at Epicure, who is taking a cake from the table. The scene is inscribed: *to telos hedone*, "pleasure is the [highest] end."

[80] I do not wish for a moment to deny the historic significance and aesthetic potential of forms developed in Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and India through fusion of Hellenistic with native elements, but the center of gravity, the artistic leadership remained in a small area—essentially the Greek islands and the Greek cities in the coastal areas of Asia Minor, with a wider "secondary" zone taking in Athens, Sikyon, Tarentum, Syracuse, Antioch, and Alexandria.

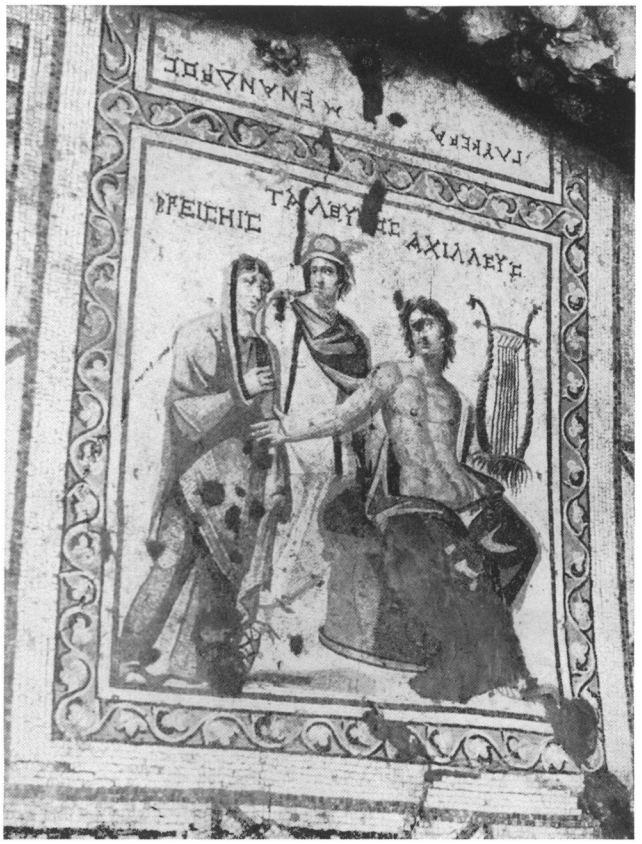


1. Pompeii, Macellum. Wall Painting, detail: Chariot

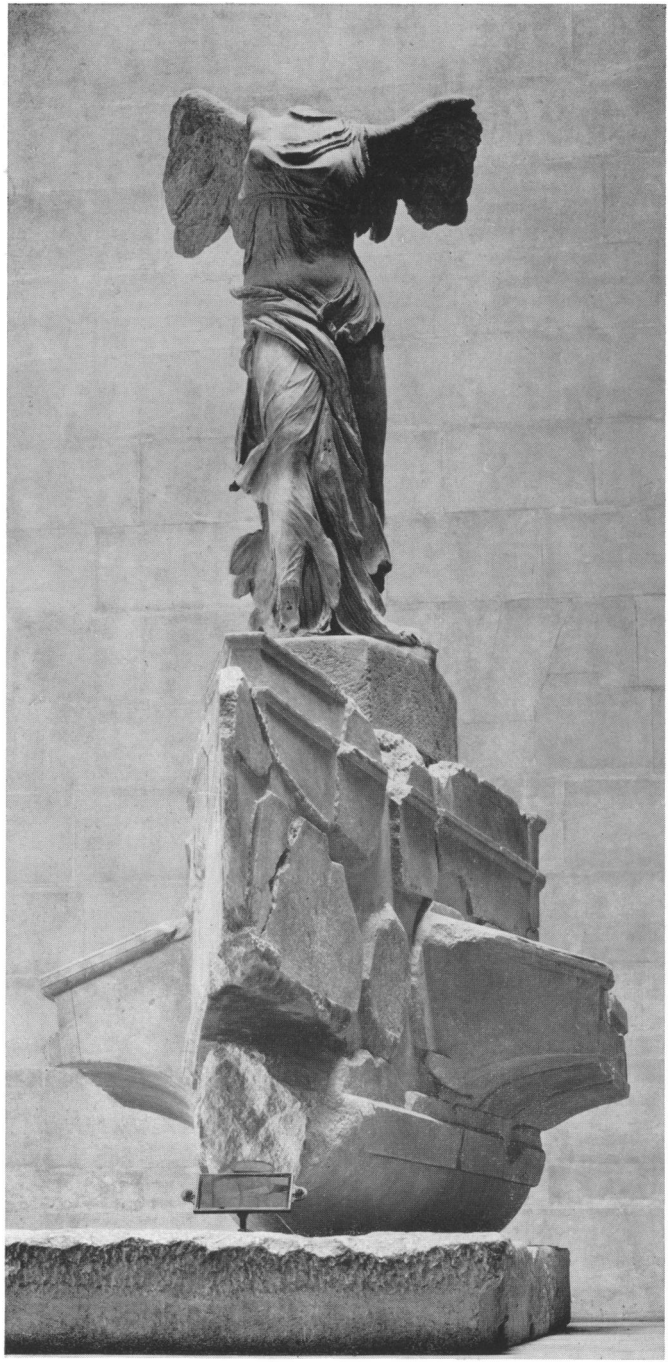


2. Kazanlik. Dome Painting, detail: Chariot

3. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Pompeian Wall Painting, Achilles Surrendering Briseis



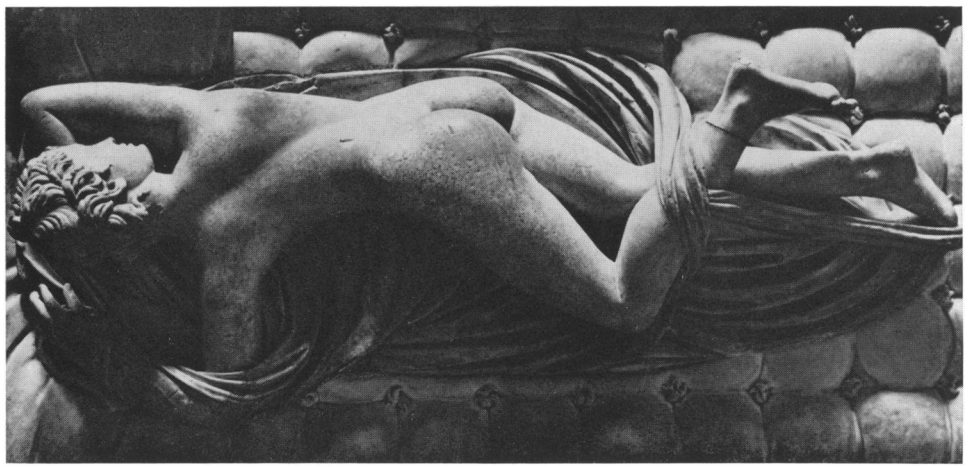
4. Antioch. Mosaic, Achilles Surrendering Briseis



5. Paris, Louvre. Victory of Samothrace

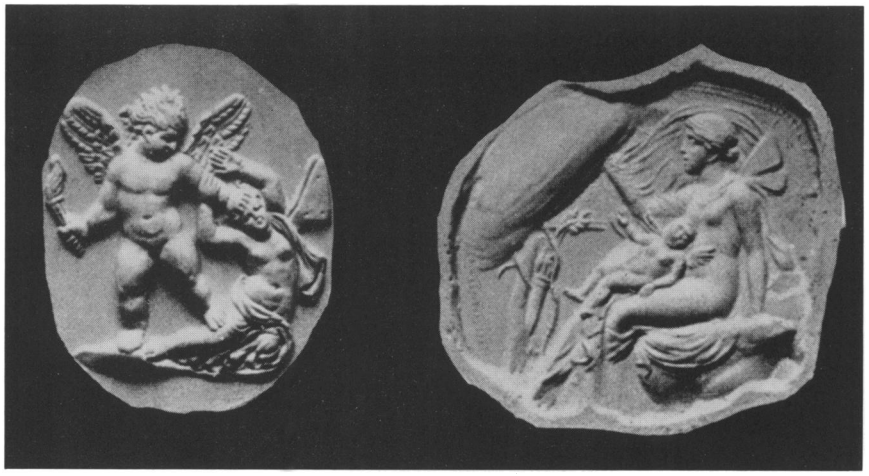
6. Pella. Pebble Mosaic, Lion Hunt, detail

7. New York, Metropolitan Museum. Bronze, Sleeping Eros



8. Paris, Louvre. Hermaphrodite

9. Rome, Museo Comunale (Antiquarium). Satyr and Nymph



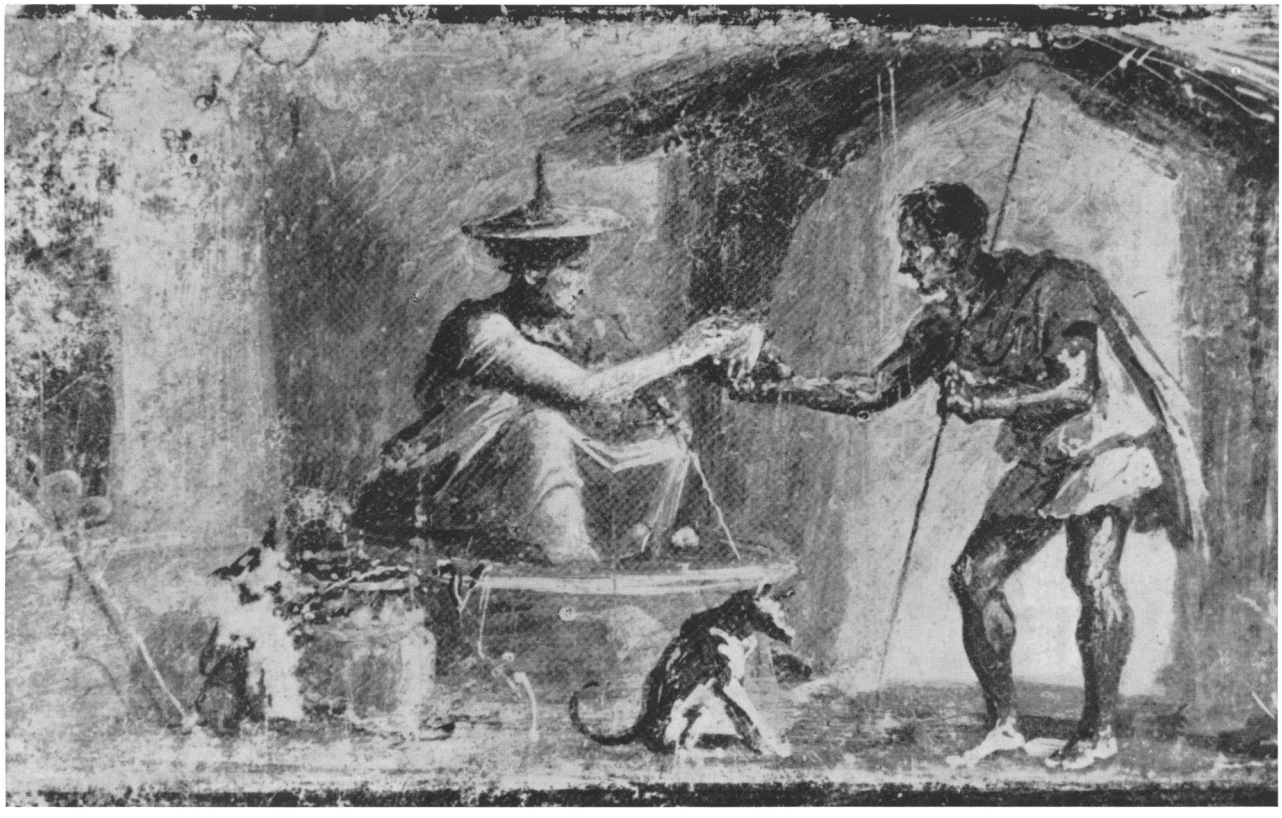
10. Casts of Gems, with (left) Eros Burning Psyche, (right) Eros in Psyche's Lap

11. Athens, National Museum. Statue, Smiling Boy

12. Copenhagen, Ny-Carlsberg Glyptotek. Grotesque Terracotta Figure of a Slave

13. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Silver Mirror, with Phaidra

14. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Mosaic, "Street Musicians," by Dioskurides of Samos

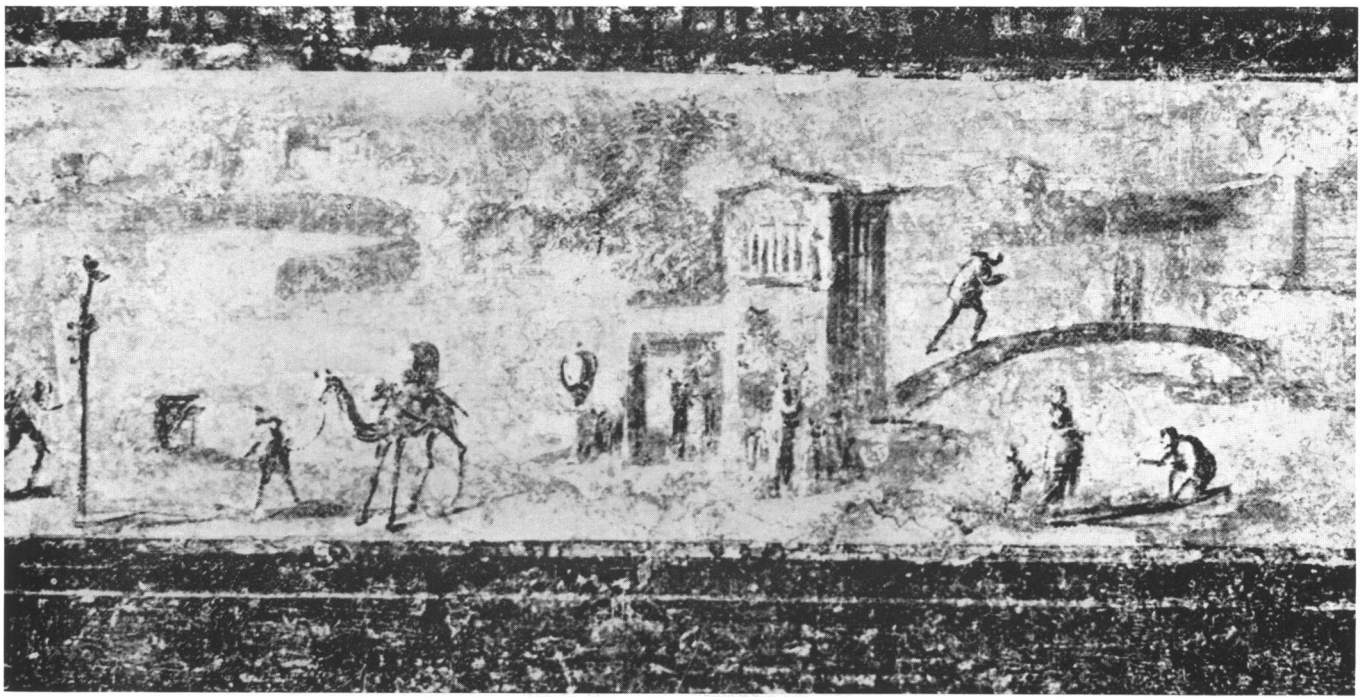


15. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Pompeian Wall Painting, Demeter and Peasant(?)

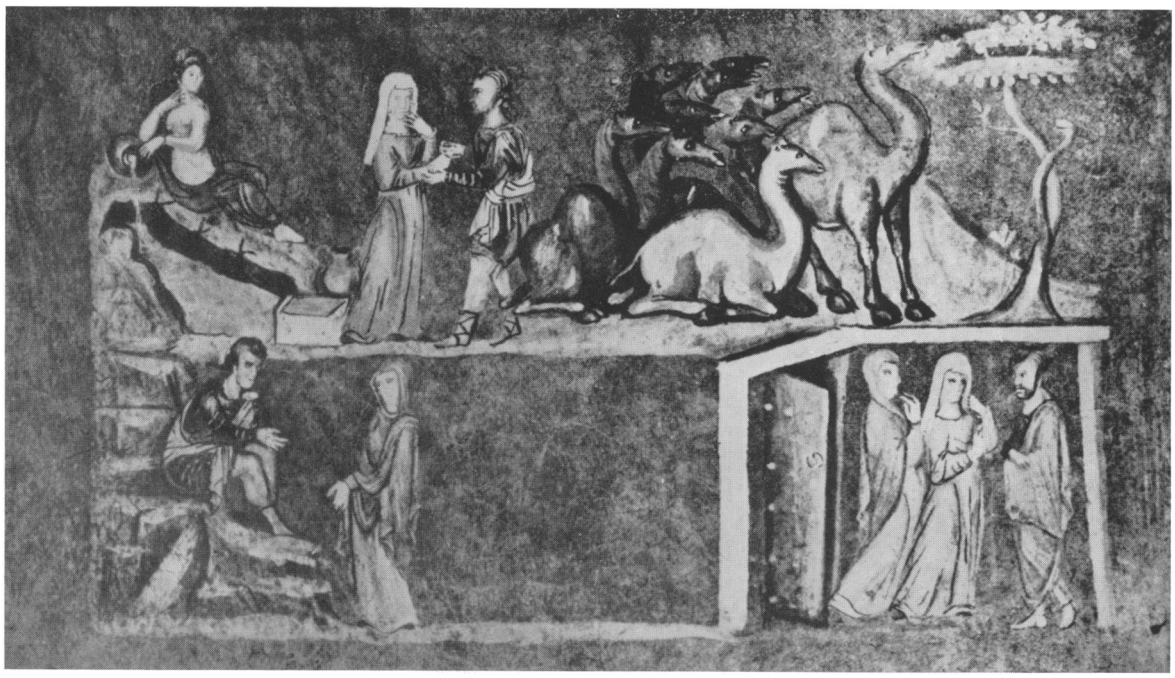
16. **Naples, Museo Nazionale Pompeian. Wall Painting,** Eros Punished


17. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Marble Crater, with Hermes, Infant Dionysos, and Nymph

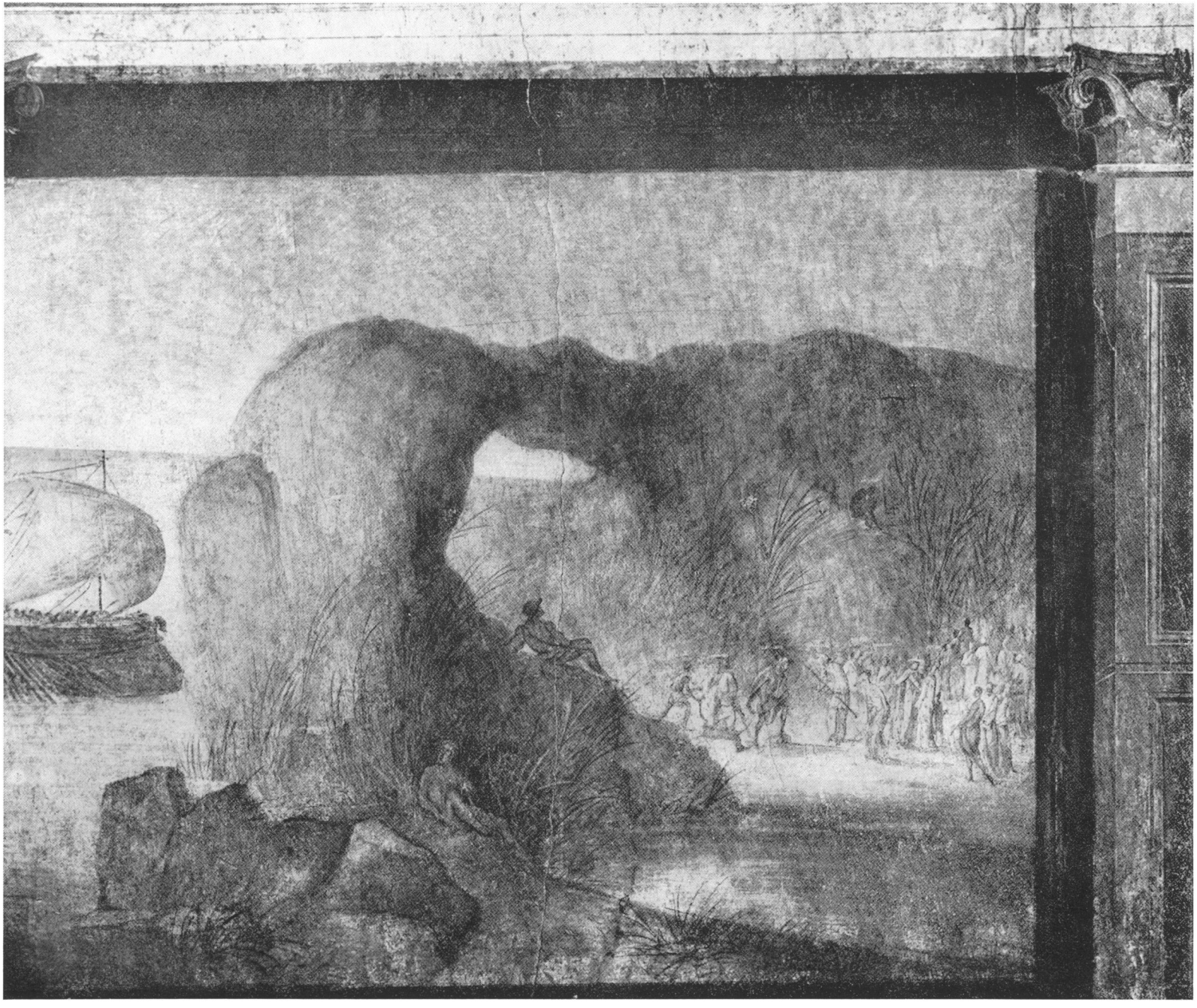
18. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Wall Painting, Silenus and the Infant Dionysos



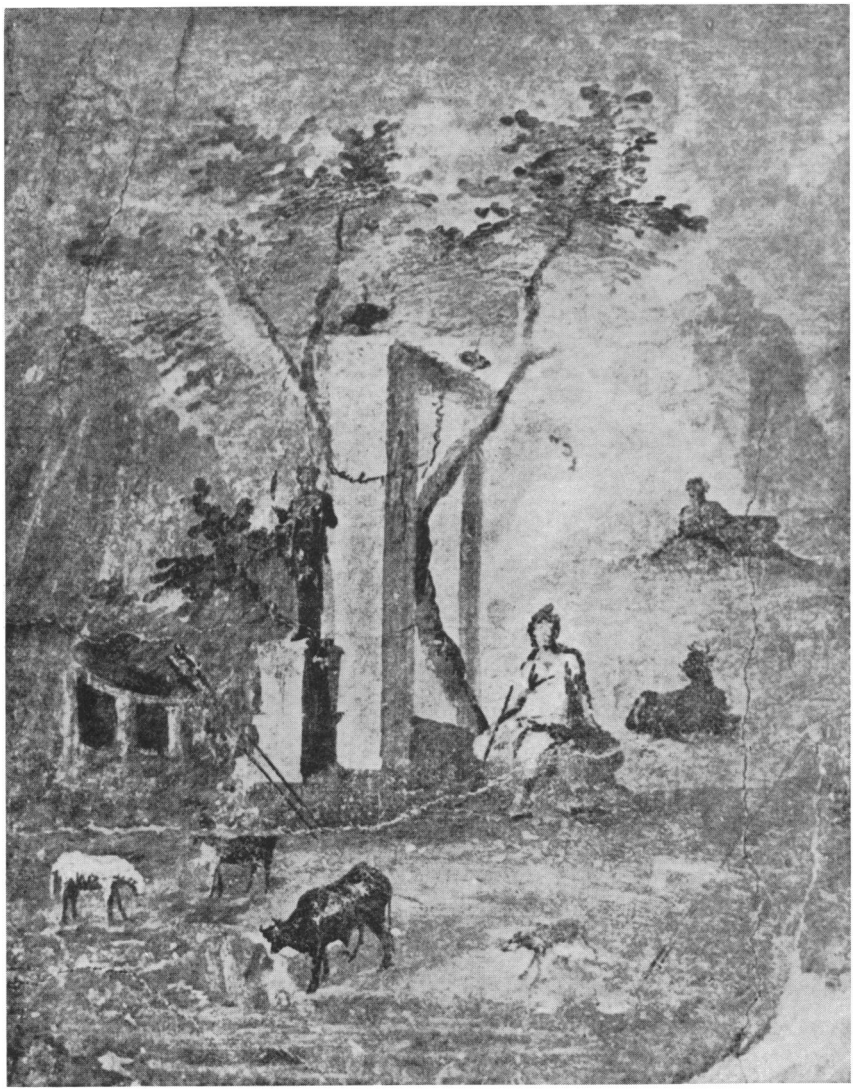
19. Rome, House of Livia. Yellow Frieze, detail



20. Vienna Genesis, Rebecca and Eliezer



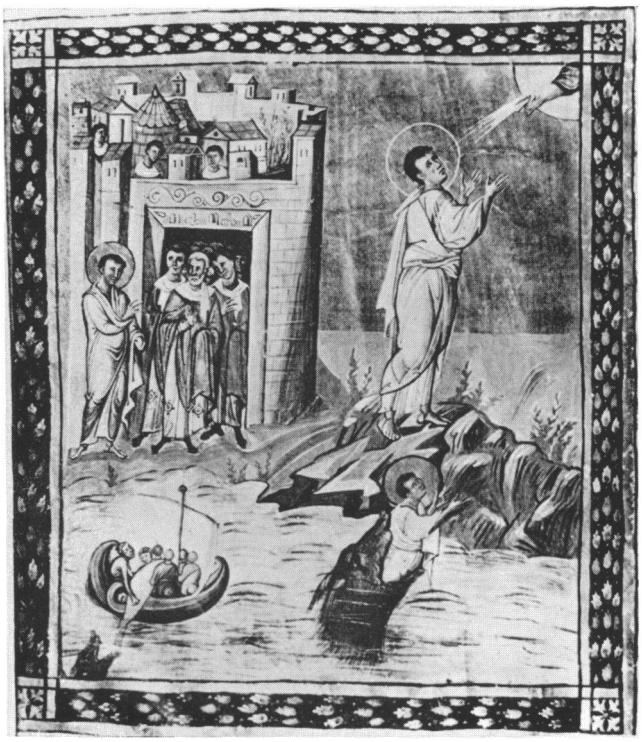
21. Vatican. Wall Painting, Odyssey Landscape, Hades Scene, Odysseus Speaking to the Dead



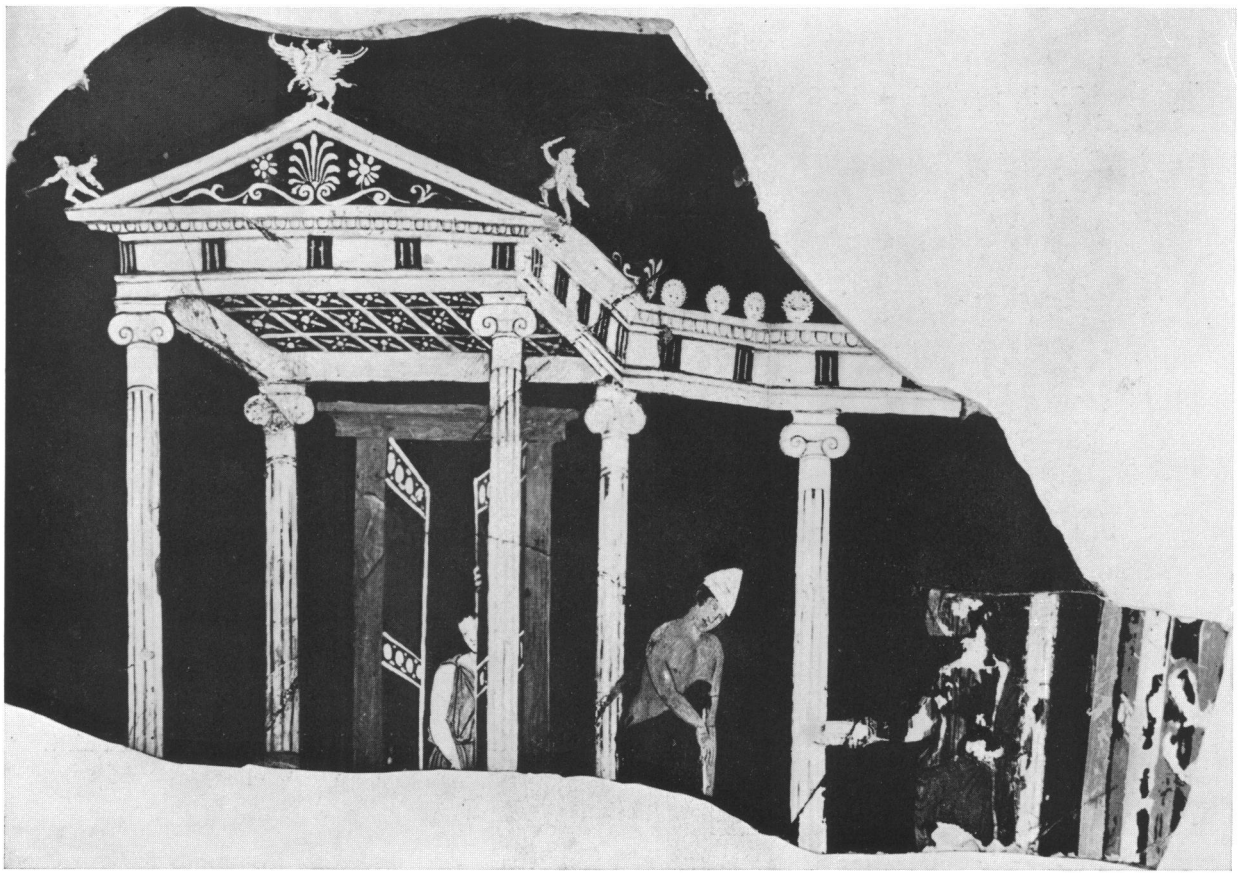
22. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Wall Painting, Paris on Mount Ida

23. Vatican. Mosaic from Hadrian's Villa, Shepherd and Flock

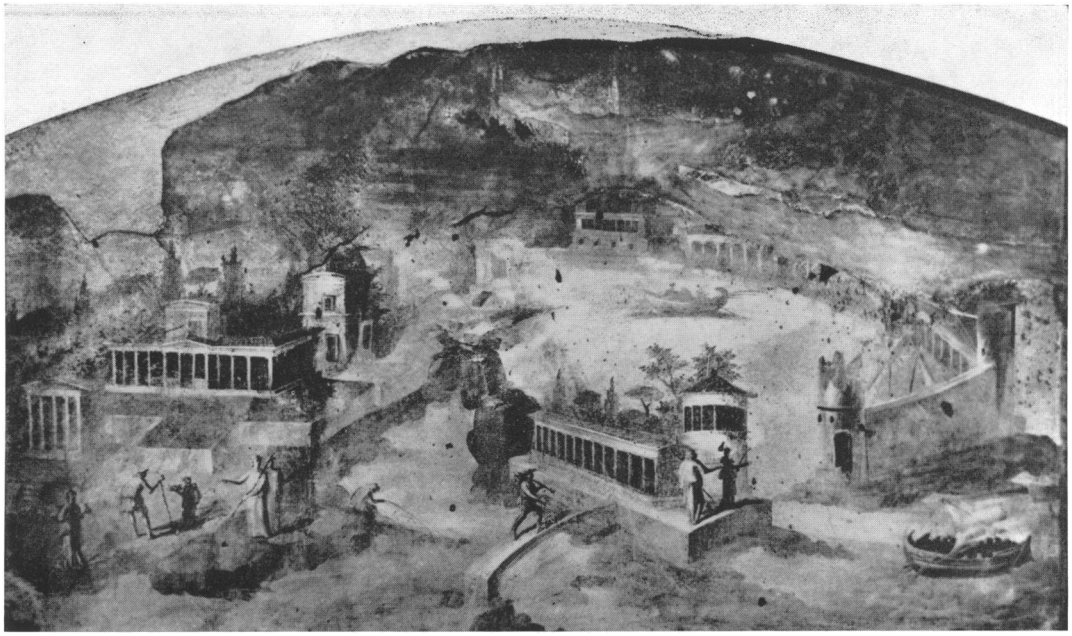
24. Pompeii, House of Amandus. Wall Painting, Fall of Icarus



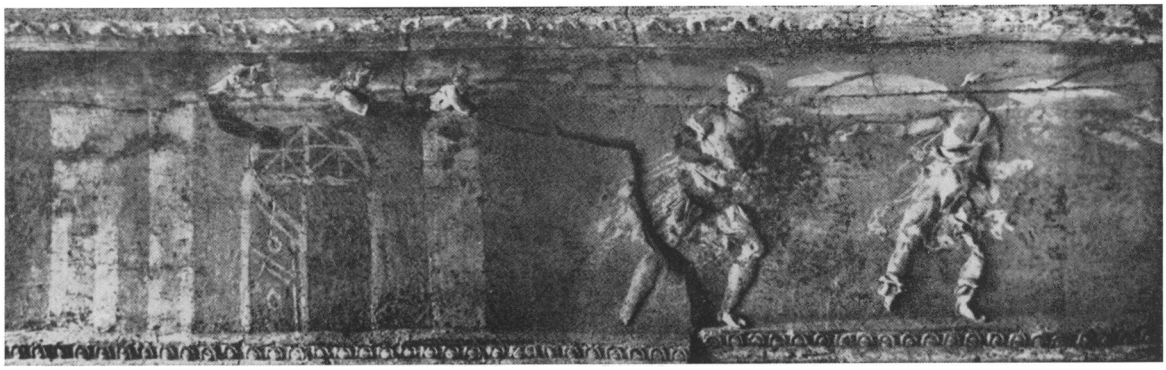
25. Paris Psalter, Jonah



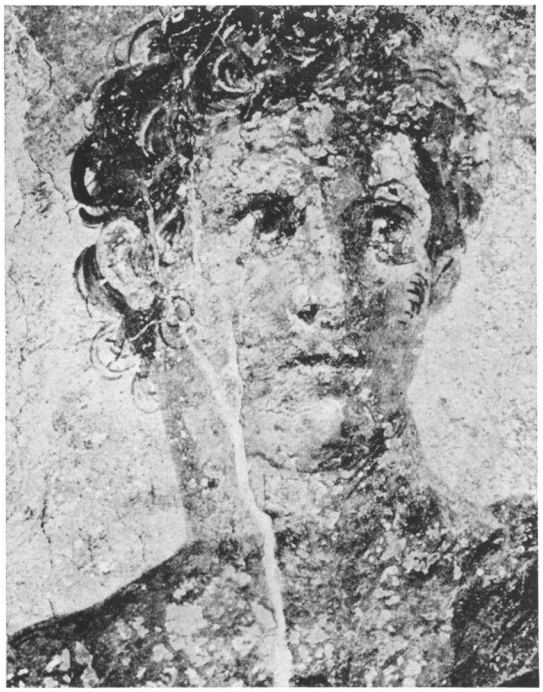
26. Würzburg, Martin von Wagner Museum. Tarentine Polychrome Crater, Stage Architecture and Dramatic Scene



27. Pompeii, House of the Little Fountain. Wall Painting, View of Imaginary Town and Landscape



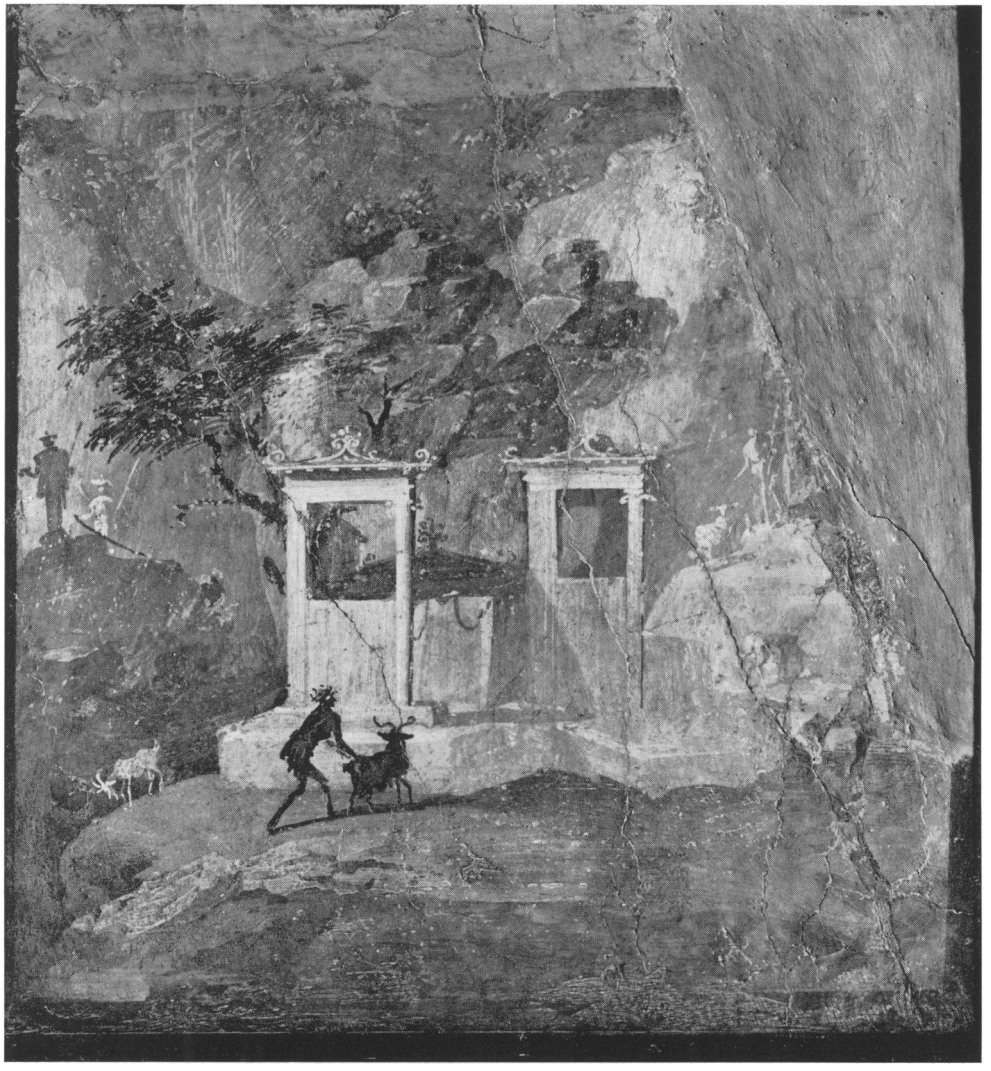
28. Pompeii, Casa del Criptoportico. Stucco Frieze, Hector Led by Moira out of Troy



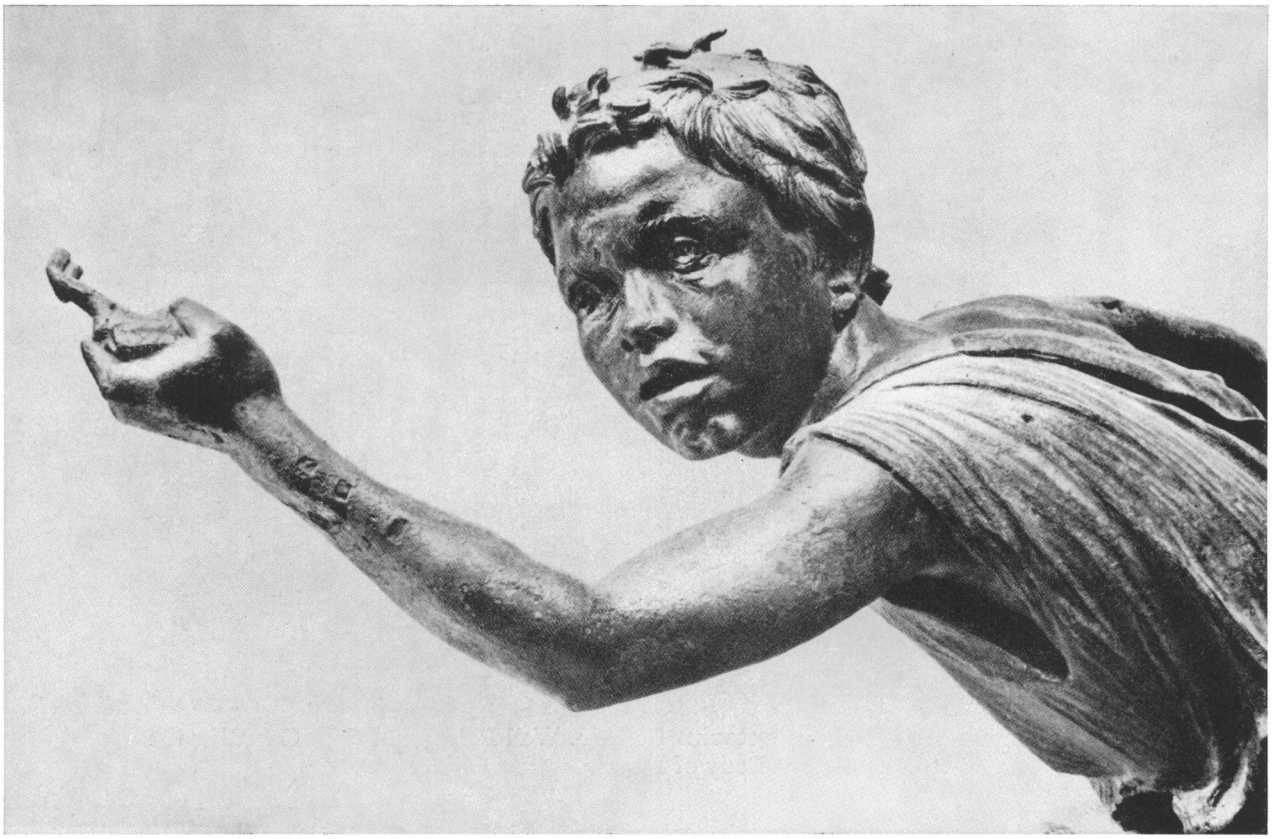
29. Naples, Museo Nazionale.
Wall Painting, detail: Head of Theseus

30. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Pompeian. Wall Painting, detail: Head of Omphale

31. Pompeii, House of C. Decimus Octavius Quartio. Wall Painting, Priam Guarding the Body of Hector



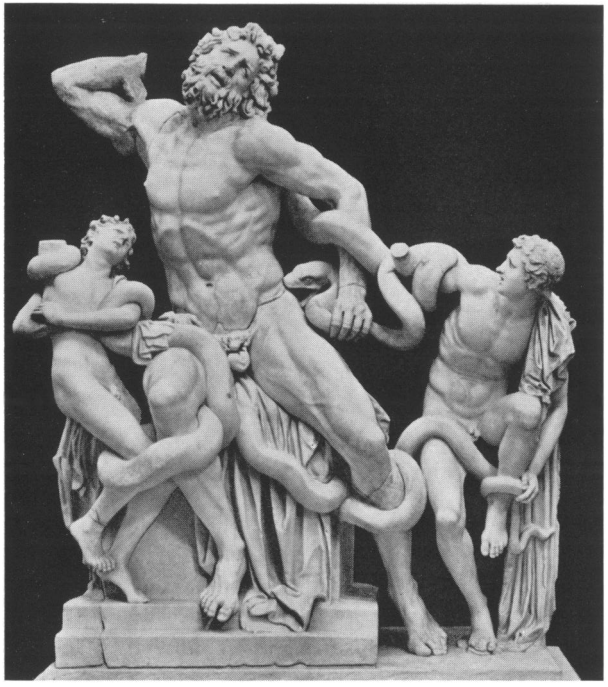
32. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Wall Painting, The Lost Ram



33. Athens, National Museum. Statue of Jockey, from Cape Artemision

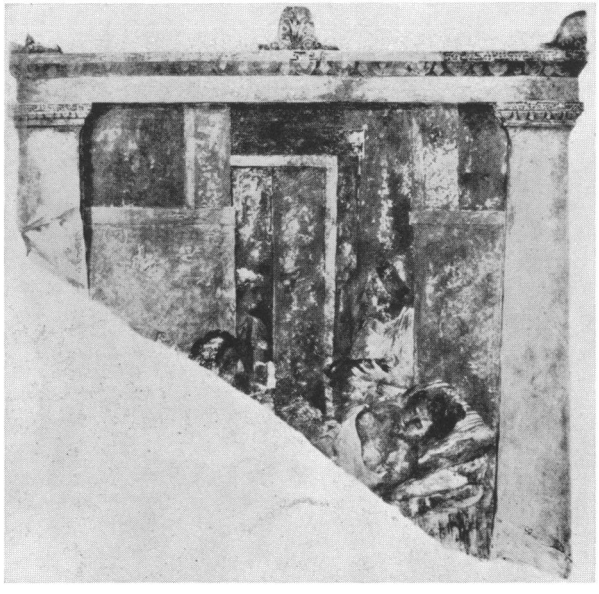
34. Paris, Louvre. Silver Cup, with Skeletons, from Boscoreale

35. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Wall Painting, detail: Spectators Looking at Dead Minotaur

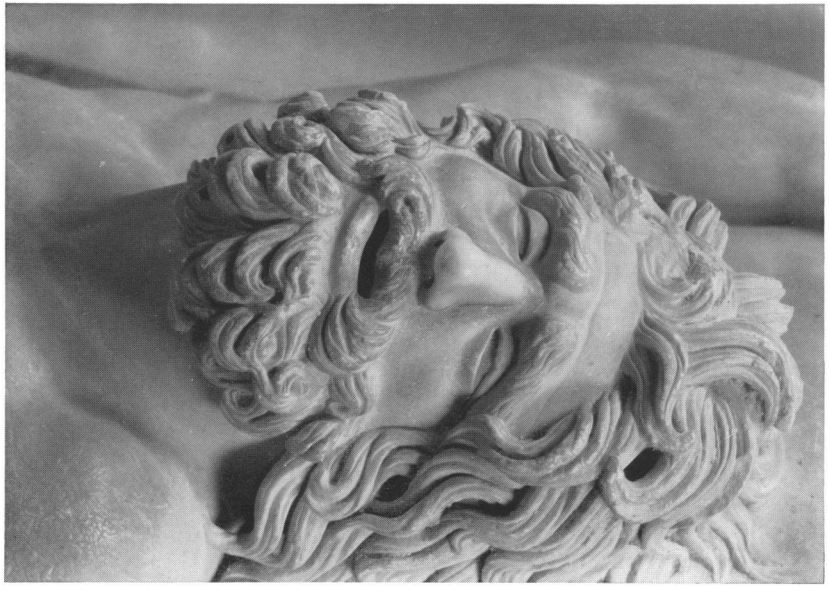


36. Vatican. Laocoon

37. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Wall Painting,
Sacrifice of Iphigeneia

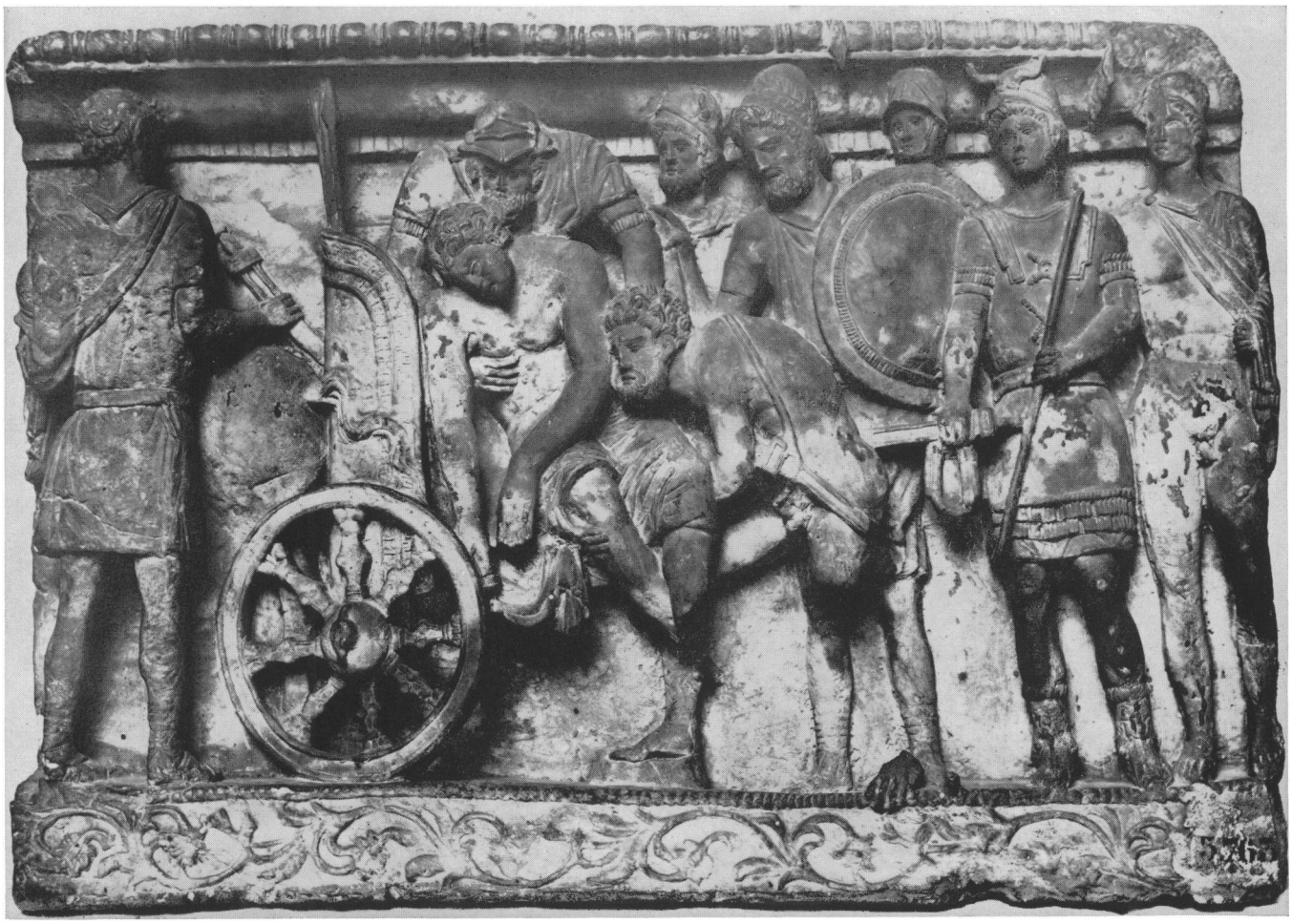


38. Volos, Museum. Grave Stele of Hediste,
from Pagasai



39. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Marble Sculpture, detail:
Head of Dying Giant. Copy of so-called "Small Attalid Dedication"

40. Paris, Louvre. Meleager Sarcophagus, detail



41. Florence, Museo Archaeologico. Alabaster Urn from Volterra, with Burial of Patroclus (Body of Patroclus Lifted from Chariot)